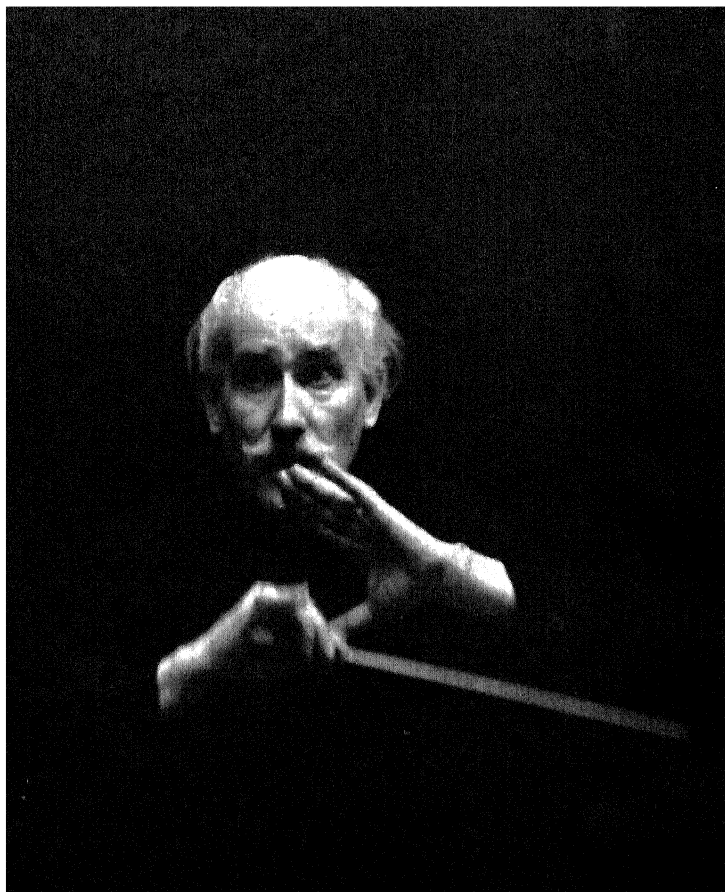




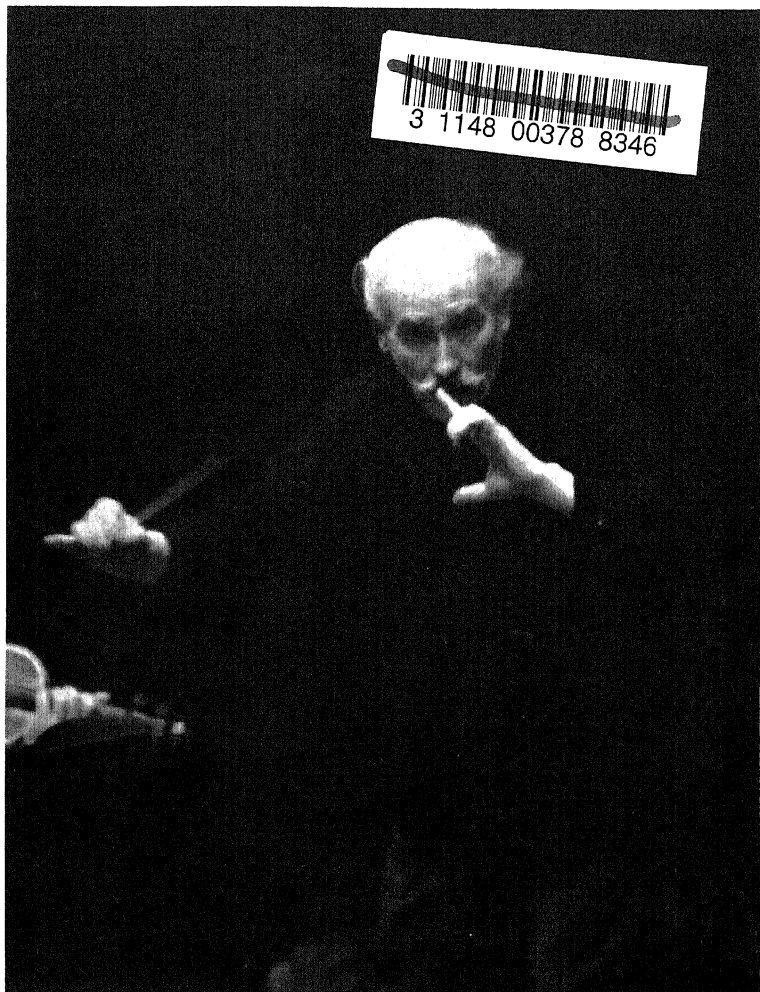
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"Once he started the progression going, he marshaled it along... with those large, plastic, sensitive movements of his right arm (extended to the point of his baton), which delineated for the orchestra the flow of sound in much of its subtly inflected detail and literally conducted the orchestra from one sound to the next. ...The left hand meanwhile was in constant activity as the instrument of the apprehensive watchfulness that showed itself on Toscanini's face—now exhorting, now quieting, now warning, now suppressing."

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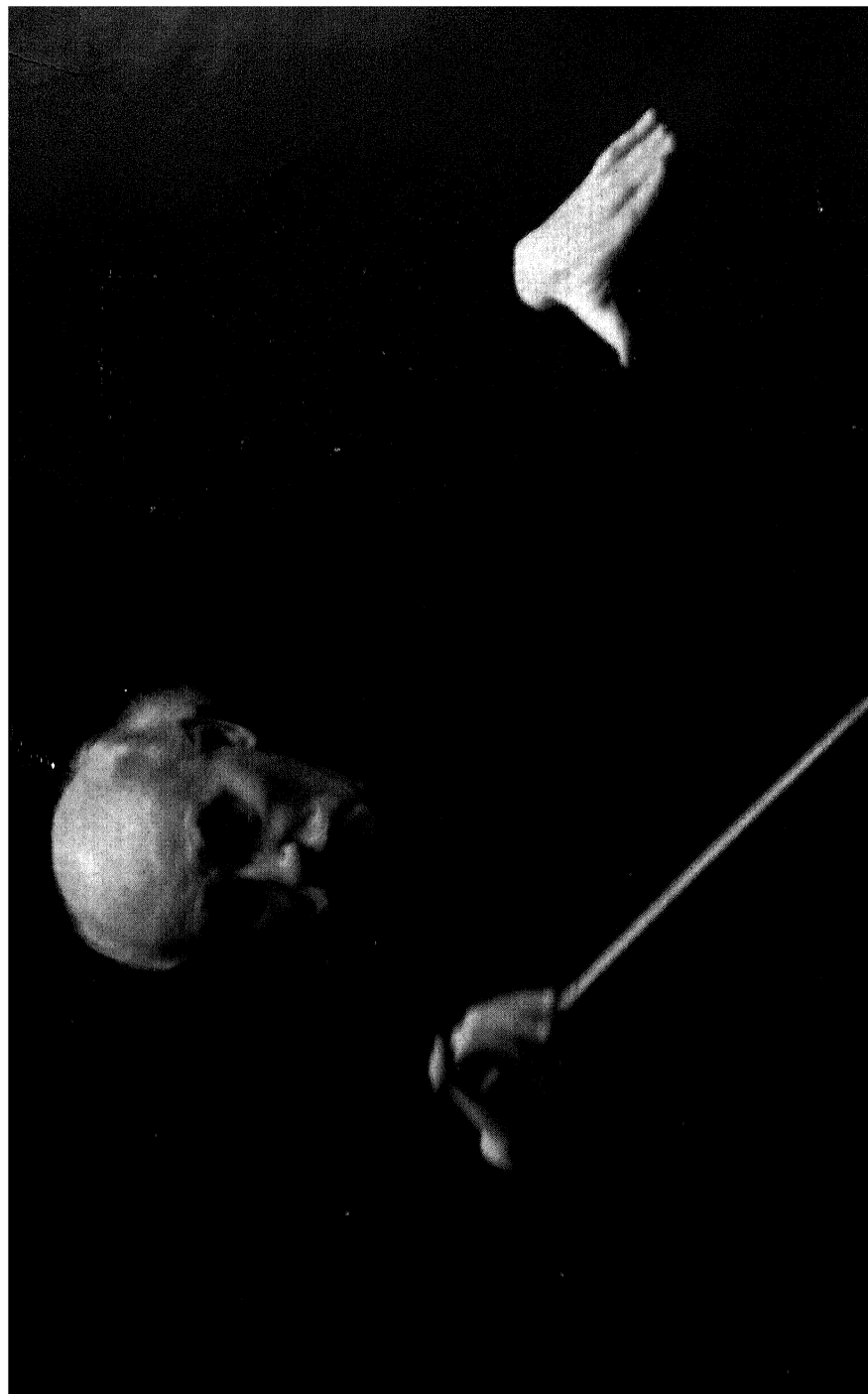
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CONVERSATIONS WITH TOSCANINI

B. H. Haggin

DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC., GARDEN CITY,
NEW YORK

1959

All photographs were taken during the recording session in Carnegie Hall on March 4, 1947, by Robert Hupka.

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CONVERSATIONS WITH
TOSCANINI

CONVERSATIONS WITH TOSCANINI

Once, after a rehearsal at which Toscanini had erupted into one of his rages, I heard an NBC Symphony player ask Harry Glantz, the orchestra's first trumpet who had played under Toscanini in the New York Philharmonic: "Was he any worse in his Philharmonic days?"

"Well," said Glantz with a meaningful look, "he was fifteen years younger."

The fact is that Toscanini did mellow in his later years; and it is to this fact, I am sure, that I owe the personal experiences with him that I am about to describe. For from the very beginning of my awareness of his existence—which is to say from January 1914, when I heard my first performance at the Metropolitan, one of *Madama Butterfly* which he conducted—he was for me an awesome figure, known to be formidable to the musicians whom he worked with in the opera house, and remote, forbidding, unapproachable outside of the opera house—unapproachable above all to the press (though one of the newspaper reviewers, Max Smith, was a personal friend). And this im-

pression of him was strengthened in the course of time by the excitement over his sudden, silent, unexplained, and therefore mysterious departure from the Metropolitan in April 1915; the excitement over his return in the season of 1920-21 for a tour with the orchestra of La Scala; the excitement over his coming as guest conductor to the New York Philharmonic in January 1926; the excitement over his departure—again silent and mysterious—from the New York Philharmonic-Symphony in 1936; the excitement over his performances in Salzburg in 1937.

Toscanini's awesomeness was brought home to me personally in one particular way. My piano teacher at the Institute of Musical Art had known some of the wealthy women who were influential in the affairs of New York orchestras; and I had been given permission to attend Mengelberg's rehearsals first with the National Symphony and then with the New York Philharmonic. Some of these women also came to the rehearsals; and Mengelberg seemed to enjoy having a little audience for his lectures to the orchestra on what he called the "princips" of orchestral performance. But with Toscanini nobody was allowed at rehearsals; and one read about the lights being turned on periodically in Carnegie Hall while the staff went through the balconies to make sure nobody was hiding up there. Under these circumstances I didn't even try to get in; but I must have learned things were different in Salzburg, for in 1937, when I was about to go there, I secured, through the kindness of Mr. B. W. Huebsch, a letter from Stefan Zweig to Mme. Toscanini asking permission for me to attend one rehearsal. In Salzburg, in obedience to Zweig's

instructions, I presented myself to a specified intermediary who took me to the *Festspielhaus* where we waited for Mme. Toscanini to come out; and I was then presented to her and gave her the letter. She asked which rehearsal I would like to attend, and I said one of Verdi's *Requiem*; and she said I would hear from her at the proper time, a few weeks later, but I never did. By this time I had—as someone who was keeping the AP correspondent in Vienna informed of what was happening in Salzburg—become *persona grata* to the director of the festival; and from him I obtained a pass to the last rehearsal for Toscanini's last orchestral concert. But when I got to the *Festspielhaus* I found a little group of Toscanini relatives and friends standing outside disconsolately: enraged by something that had gone wrong in the rehearsal the day before, he had decreed that nobody was to be allowed in today.

The excitement over Toscanini's return to New York in December 1937 to conduct the NBC Symphony did not make him a less awesome and remote figure for me. And I was therefore wholly unprepared for what happened in Carnegie Hall one Sunday afternoon in March 1940. Sauntering down the aisle, Robert A. Simon of *The New Yorker* stopped to ask: "Do you know Toscanini reads you in *The Nation*?" Amazed, I answered: "No. How do you know?" "People who see him have told me," said Simon. "He showed them your article on the Philharmonic and Barbirolli and said: 'See?'"

Actually the article Simon referred to had been not about the Philharmonic and Barbirolli but about how certain critics had dealt with the subject. I had pointed out how

W. J. Henderson's crotchety irritation with the fuss about virtuoso conductors had caused him to insist in the *Sun* that the Philharmonic and the music of Beethoven and Brahms would remain even without Toscanini and even with a conductor of less than stellar magnitude, though he must have known that the orchestra and the music would sound different under such a conductor; and how this had placed a powerful argument in the hands of those who had brought about the engagement of Barbirolli, which had considerably reduced the orchestra's usefulness to the community. I had pointed out further that Henderson had at least—when he had heard subsequently what the Philharmonic and the music actually sounded like under Barbirolli's direction—expressed his disapproval; whereas Lawrence Gilman had written in the *Herald Tribune* concerning Barbirolli's achievements—including a performance of Brahms's Fourth which had torn passion to tatters—that they showed him to be “something better and rarer and finer than a conductor of power and sensibility. He permits us to think that he is akin to those uncommon interpreters who give us a measure of ‘that inner standard of distinction, selection, refusal’ which an incorruptible artist once defined: who have sifted from experience ‘all that seemed beautiful and significant, and have treasured above all things those savings of fine gold.’” And I had said that in this way Gilman had been of great help to the Philharmonic directors—“the help, perhaps, that an orchestra's program annotator should be; but he failed in his obligations to his position as critic, to his readers, to the community whose orchestra the Philharmonic was.” All this apparently had

been of interest to Toscanini; and his "See?" carried implications of how he had felt about it.

I was pleased of course by what Simon told me; but it wasn't until a year later that it gave me the courage to write Toscanini for what I considered a legitimate purpose: to suggest that he perform Berlioz's *L'Enfance du Christ*, which W. J. Turner had declared to be Berlioz's most beautiful score, but which at that time was never performed. I wrote Toscanini that I addressed my request to him because of the interest in Berlioz he had shown by playing *Harold in Italy* and the *Queen Mab* Scherzo and other excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*; because it had been in *Harold* as he had performed it around 1930 that I had first understood the special quality of Berlioz's mind, imagination and style; and because what I was asking was something for the entire musical public: it was like asking someone to let the public see a great painting that had been hidden for many years. And I added a request that he conduct and record *Queen Mab*.

Some days later, opening an envelope addressed in an unfamiliar and striking handwriting, and unfolding the letter inside it, I was amazed again to see at the bottom of the sheet, signed very cordially, the name Arturo Toscanini. Evidently under the impression that I had suggested *L'Enfance du Christ* for the broadcast of April 5, he wrote that he was sorry but the program for that date had already been planned as follows: Rossini's Overture to *Il Signor Bruschino*, Mendelssohn's *Scotch* Symphony, and Berlioz's Overture *Les Francs-Juges*, his *Love Scene* and *Queen Mab* from *Romeo and Juliet*, and his Hungarian March from

The Damnation of Faust. And he assured me *Queen Mab* would be recorded.

I wrote to thank him for his kindness in answering me, and to express my hope that he would perform *L'Enfance* at a later time—which he never did.

In November 1941 I wrote to him again. He was to conduct the Philadelphia Orchestra in three programs that season, and Victor had announced some of the performances would be recorded. I told him that I had had his 1936 performance of Schubert's C-major Symphony with the New York Philharmonic recorded off the air, but that the recording had turned out to be imperfect, and that I therefore hoped this symphony would be one of the works he would record for Victor. I hoped also for recordings of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* and *Romeo and Juliet*, of Mozart and Haydn, and of course Berlioz's *Queen Mab*. And I wrote that I had learned from his son that he had disliked what I had written about Brahms in my *Book of the Symphony*, but that possibly he would like what I had written about Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Tchaikovsky in my new book *Music on Records*.

This brought a reply in which Toscanini informed me that one of his first recordings would be the Schubert C-major Symphony which he was going to conduct the following week with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and that he would record also the *Pathétique*, *Ibéria* and *Queen Mab*. Then, for no reason, apparently, other than the fact that it was in his mind at the moment, he went on to say he had a weakness for Beethoven's Septet, which he had played the preceding season with ten violins, ten violas, eight cellos

and four basses, because he had never enjoyed this wonderful music when it was played by seven instruments as Beethoven wrote it. He had, he said, heard many performances of the piece in its original form by distinguished musicians; but the right balance [of strings and three winds] had never been attained. He would, he went on, read what I said about Schubert, Haydn and Mozart with the utmost interest; concerning Brahms his comment was, for the moment, the Italian proverb *acqua in bocca*. And he ended with cordial greetings.

The Schubert C-major opened the first program, which I heard at the Saturday-night concert of the pair on November 15. The performance of the symphony was of course the matter of major interest; but interesting too was the way the orchestra played and sounded under Toscanini's direction. Since 1937 he had been working with the NBC Symphony, and producing with it excitingly beautiful and effective performances but not the sheer incandescence of execution and sonority that he had achieved with the New York Philharmonic; and the reason for this was not, as some have contended recently, that he could conduct orchestras but not build and train them. "You can quote me on this," said an NBC Symphony violinist in happy excitement once after a rehearsal of Debussy's *La Mer*, at the end of which the orchestra had applauded Toscanini: "We come here to go to school!" And the contention—by some who never even heard the Philharmonic under either Mengelberg or Toscanini—that it was not Toscanini but Mengelberg who made of this orchestra an ensemble in the class of Stokowski's Philadelphia and Koussevitzky's

Boston Symphony, is contrary to the facts that I observed. I was a witness, at the daily rehearsals, of the training Mengelberg gave the Philharmonic from 1921 to 1926, and can testify to the discipline and finish of its playing under his direction; but although I did not witness Toscanini's work at rehearsals I did hear that it was only when the orchestra began to play under him in 1926 that it began to exhibit the dazzling virtuosity and tonal beauty comparable with those of the Philadelphia and Boston Symphony—to produce, that is, the razor-sharp attacks, the sharp-contoured phrases, the radiant sonorities and transparent textures comparable with the Philadelphia's lush sumptuousness, the Boston Symphony's refinement of execution and tone. Moreover it was Toscanini who in 1928 chose the players from the Philharmonic and the New York Symphony for the combined Philharmonic-Symphony, and who trained this orchestra to the point where its playing exhibited the incandescence I have mentioned, which can be heard in the 1936 recordings of the Rossini Overtures to *Semiramide* and *L'Italiana in Algeri* and the Brahms-Haydn Variations.

If now it is asked what *was* the reason why the Philharmonic could play in this way and the NBC Symphony could not, the answer is that the Philharmonic was a group of players who had worked together for a number of years, whose only professional activity was playing together as a symphony orchestra, and who—whatever the laxity they permitted themselves with other conductors—maintained in their four or five rehearsals and three or four concerts each week with Toscanini the discipline, cohesiveness, and sen-

sitiveness to his direction that they had acquired in their years of work with him; whereas the NBC Symphony had been assembled only a couple of months before Toscanini began to conduct it, and the nature and conditions of its members' other work largely nullified the training he gave it. NBC did not in 1937 create an additional new orchestra for Toscanini's exclusive use: it had a staff orchestra for its Red and Blue Networks, and the NBC Symphony was set up as a group within that staff orchestra—a group which included a number of players engaged for Toscanini as higher-caliber replacements of previous members of the staff orchestra. The weekly "services" of the NBC Symphony players were therefore not merely the up to ten hours of rehearsal and the hour-and-a-half broadcast with Toscanini: they included also more than that number of hours of rehearsal and performance for the networks' other programs, sustaining and commercial, with conductors unable to hold the players to Toscanini's high technical and musical standards; and he had to work with men who sometimes came to his rehearsal straight from a two-hour rehearsal of dance music, or rushed from his rehearsal to a commercial program under a staff conductor. And later, after NBC had had to sell the Blue Network, the NBC Symphony was made up of (1) a permanent group of about forty-five who were part of the NBC staff orchestra of sixty-five that included about twenty men used in jazz programs, and (2) about forty-five extra men engaged only for the NBC Symphony series, who were not always the same; and members of the jazz contingent also were used on occasion. Hence it was not until 1950, and the trans-

continental tour that gave the orchestra six weeks of rehearsing and playing under Toscanini, that it began to exhibit the precise, finished and sensitive execution, the blending, refinement and beauty of tone, of a first-rate symphony orchestra.

In Philadelphia in November 1941, therefore, after Toscanini's four years with the NBC house orchestra, it was interesting to hear what he achieved with one of the world's great symphony orchestras again—this time with the marvelous instrument Stokowski had created in the Philadelphia Orchestra. One thing that was interesting was the change in the orchestra's playing: instead of the Stokowski flood of tonal sumptuousness and splendor it produced the Toscanini radiance, transparency, sharpness of attack and contour. But it was interesting also that playing under Toscanini only a few days the orchestra was not sensitized to his direction as the Philharmonic had been after ten years, so that he didn't get from it the miraculous subtleties of inflection and coloring of the Philharmonic's 1936 *Semiramide* performance. And there was in addition a human aspect of the occasion that was touching: Stokowski had left the orchestra a few years earlier; and the awe on the face of the very young first cellist, Samuel Mayes, as he looked up from his music to Toscanini during the Schubert symphony, the smiles of all the men at the end of the performance, were evidence of what it meant to them to be playing again under a great conductor, and one who was in addition a great musician.

But what was most important was the performance of the symphony. The work was very dear to Toscanini (he

played it at his very first orchestral concert, on March 20, 1896, in Turin); and his treatment of it had always been criticized—one of the things objected to being his faster-than-usual tempo for the second movement. I had always been startled by the first measures and had then gone along easily with the rest of the movement; but at this Philadelphia performance I thought I understood for the first time what was behind that fast tempo: a feeling for plastic simplicity, economy, subtlety, that caused Toscanini often to set a single subtly modified tempo for all the sections of a movement. In the second movement of the Schubert C-major, then, he set a tempo for the opening section that he could maintain unchanged not only for the alternating section but for the catastrophe in the middle of the movement, so that the increasing urgency and tension of this passage was achieved without any acceleration, and in fact a slight broadening at the end gave shattering power to the chords with which the passage breaks off into momentary silence.

It was also objected that Toscanini's performance was not in the Viennese tradition—which led me to question such tradition and its authority. Even if Schubert had himself conducted a performance of his C-major Symphony which conductors of his time had heard and followed as a model for their own performances, which in turn had been followed as models by their successors, and so on down to the present—even if all this had happened I did not believe that what Schubert had done with the symphony would be still discernible in the performances today. But actually the symphony was rehearsed but not performed shortly

after his death; then it was forgotten until Schumann discovered it in 1838 and Mendelssohn played it in 1839; and these performances represented only the understanding of the work that each conductor had achieved by his own study of the score. Did this establish a tradition which could forbid other musicians—and one of the greatest musicians of all time—to do the same thing? (I asked this unaware that Richard Strauss, asking who could maintain today that Beethoven did or did not want a particular tempo, had contended there was no tradition determining such matters and the personal artistic conviction of the conductor had to decide what was right or wrong.)

Another objection was that this symphony was a Viennese work which should be played with a Viennese relaxation that Toscanini's performance did not have. But not all the music written in Vienna is alike, and not all of it is relaxed: the particular relaxed quality of some of Schubert's music is not in Mozart's or Beethoven's or even all of Schubert's. A correct understanding of his music includes perception of the power and tension in some of it; and a correct understanding of the C-major Symphony includes perception of its sustained tension and momentum and grandeur, which Toscanini's performance achieved as no other did.

In addition to the Schubert, Toscanini conducted Debussy's *Ibéria* and Respighi's *Roman Festivals*; and at the end I went backstage and talked with a member of the orchestra whom I knew. After a while I caught sight of Walter Toscanini; and I asked him if I might thank his father. "Certainly," he replied. "He reads you; he answers

your letters; he doesn't answer *my* letters but he answers *yours*"; and smiling he led me to his father's dressing room. When we got there Toscanini and Mme. Toscanini were standing in the doorway saying good-by to the last visitor, and Mme. Toscanini was about to close the door. "This is Mr. Haggin of *The Nation*," said Walter to his father, who smiled and extended his hand but said nothing; and I thanked him and left.

I went to Philadelphia again for the concert of January 10, 1942, at which Toscanini conducted Haydn's Symphony No. 99, Respighi's orchestration of Bach's *Passacaglia* for organ, excerpts from Mendelssohn's music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration*. When I saw Walter Toscanini at the end of the concert he said: "Father did not know who you were last time. He said: 'Why you did not tell me it was Mr. Haggin of *The Nation*?' " And he led me again to his father's dressing room, which this time was filled with visitors. But when Walter introduced me to him Toscanini again smiled and extended his hand and said nothing. There was an exchange in Italian between Walter and his father; then, as Toscanini was drawn away by someone else, Walter said to me: "Father said about your new book: 'He writes like God: he knows what is good music and what is bad music. I do not know what is good music and what is bad music; but *he* knows.' "

Before I went to Philadelphia for the concert of February 7 I was told I could be present at the recording session the following day. At the concert Toscanini conducted Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, a Vieuxtemps Ballade and Polonaise,

Berlioz's *Queen Mab*, and Debussy's *La Mer*; and the next day I was present during the recording of the *Pathétique* and part of *La Mer*. The occasion provided my first experience of Toscanini rehearsing—of which I remember now only his working out dynamic values and balances in the introduction of the *Pathétique*.

During a break in the recording session, Walter invited me to visit his father in his dressing room, where we found him fanning himself and worrying about the difficulties of recording. "I make *pianissimo* in *La Mer*: in hall is correct; on record is *not* correct! In 1936 I make *Rhine Journey* with Philharmonic. I go to Paris; a commission—Gilman, Betti, Chotzinoff*—listen to record and say is good. In Carnegie Hall is right tempo; when I hear record, is wrong tempo. Last year I am in bed, and a friend telephone to me: 'Maestro, listen to radio.' I listen: is *Rhine Journey*; is good—is right tempo—IS MY RHINE JOURNEY! in 1936 is wrong tempo; now is right tempo! Ah, *Dio santo!*" and he hurled the fan at the wall in despair.

The program was repeated in New York two days later—which is to say after the additional rehearsal and playing at the recording sessions—and in Carnegie Hall, which was acoustically even finer than the Academy of Music; with the result that the sounds produced by the orchestra on

* In 1936 Lawrence Gilman had been the music critic of the New York *Herald Tribune*; Adolfo Betti the first violin of the Flonzaley Quartet; Samuel Chotzinoff the music critic of the New York *Post*. Chotzinoff was a close personal friend of Toscanini—which enabled him, in 1937, to secure Toscanini for NBC; and thereafter he held a high position at NBC in which his principal activity was handling Toscanini and the affairs of the NBC Symphony for the company.

this occasion ranged themselves with the other wonders I had heard achieved by human powers in Carnegie Hall—the sounds produced by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Stokowski, the Boston Symphony under Koussevitzky, the New York Philharmonic under Toscanini. But the sounds were not just sounds: they added up to wonderfully right and effective realizations of the pieces of music; and it seemed to me that one reason for the impression of rightness conveyed at every point in the progression of the first movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* was the plastic coherence imparted to the form in sound by Toscanini's sense for continuity and proportion in the continuum of sound moving in time; and that another reason was the fact that the nuances of sonority and tempo with which he molded this continuum were the ones Tchaikovsky specified in his score to produce the form he had imagined. Or rather, they were the close approximations to these that a performer could achieve: the composer's notations could not convey the imagined form completely; the performer therefore could not produce it in living sound exactly as the composer had imagined it; and his obligation was to produce it to the extent to which the notation did convey it. About halfway through the first movement of Debussy's *La Mer*, after the music has died down into mutterings of basses and kettledrums, an upward leap of the cellos is followed by a slight swell of the kettledrum from *pp* to *p* and back, and this by an echoing swell of the horns. There was no notation that could convey exactly what Debussy imagined as *pp* and *p* and as the timbres of the horns; and his notation therefore left room for the differ-

ences between Toscanini's values for *pp* and *p* and Koussevitzky's, the sound of Toscanini's horns and that of Koussevitzky's; but it left no room for Koussevitzky's change of the swell of kettledrum followed by echoing swell of horns to the simultaneous thunderous swell of kettledrum *and* horns. For Koussevitzky a person who wanted the composer's score adhered to was someone who didn't want the music to be alive (the words are his); but it was Toscanini who, by obeying Debussy's directions, gave life to the magical effect of horns echoing over the water, and it was Koussevitzky who, by his change, killed that effect.

In April 1942 the New York Philharmonic ended its centennial season with a Beethoven festival conducted by Toscanini; and I wrote to ask him for permission to attend the rehearsals. He granted it; and so I witnessed the extraordinary thing that happened at the very first rehearsal. It was six years since Toscanini had conducted the orchestra; one expected that it would take inch-by-inch rehearsal to restore the precision and tonal beauty of its playing under him six years earlier; and the members of the orchestra must have expected this too as they sat tuning and practicing passages in the *Missa Solemnis*. Eventually the hubbub died out; there was complete silence as the orchestra waited for Toscanini; and at last he appeared at the side of the stage and, in the tense hush, walked in his absorbed fashion to the podium, stepped onto it, suppressed with a quick gesture the first sounds of a demonstration of welcome, and, with no more than a word of greeting, raised his arm and began to conduct the opening of the *Missa*. And then the

extraordinary thing happened: as though the interval had been not six years but one day, the orchestra began at once—in response to the large shaping movements of Toscanini's right arm and the subtly inflecting movements of his left hand—to produce the razor-sharp attacks, the radiant sonorities, the transparent textures, the beautifully contoured phrases which these movements had elicited in April 1936. For minutes at a time he continued to conduct and the orchestra continued to play in this way; only after such long stretches were there halts to go back and correct an imperfect balance at one point or to work out the contour of a phrase at another. And something similar happened at the end of a later rehearsal, when, turning to the finale of the First Symphony, he led the orchestra through it without interruption and produced the performance of six or seven years earlier in all its beautiful detail.

In part, certainly, the explanation of this was Toscanini's powers as a conductor—the movements through which he transmitted his moment-to-moment purpose, the compelling personal force that imposed that purpose through the movements; in part the explanation was the fact that he was conducting an orchestra he had conducted for ten years, and in works they had rehearsed and played together in those years. But I could see that in large part the explanation was the nature of Toscanini's musical conceptions that I mentioned earlier—the plastic continuity and coherence of the shapes he created in the continuum of sound moving in time. That is, in such a progression the timing and force of one sound implied the timing and force of the next irresistibly; and it was the power of these implications, caus-

ing the many players in the orchestra to produce the next sound at the same point in time and with the same weight and color, that accounted in large part for the remarkable precision of Toscanini's performances, and for what happened at that first rehearsal of the *Missa*.

Considering these musical conceptions further as musical conceptions, I was struck especially by Toscanini's feeling for the time element in the sound-time continuum; and its manifestations—in his setting of a tempo, his modification of it, his maintenance of proportion between successive tempos—were, it seemed to me, among the most distinctive characteristics of his performances. One heard in the *Missa Solemnis* the rightness of the pace of the *Benedictus* for the blessedness which the music was concerned with, and looking at the score one discovered that this pace was exactly the *Andante molto cantabile e non troppo mosso* which Beethoven prescribed; but Toscanini didn't get his tempo merely from this direction—he heard it in the music: with the same printed direction, but with not the same musical discernment, Koussevitzky had the *Benedictus* move at an *Andante* pace so *troppo mosso* as to be an unsuitable *Allegretto*. Again, though it was Beethoven who gave only one direction for the entire second movement of the *Eroica* Symphony, it was the necessities of Toscanini's own understanding of the music that caused him alone to establish a single unifying tempo for the various sections. And with no directions at all from Beethoven it was such necessities that produced the subtle modification of this single tempo, the distentions that built up the fugato section of the movement to a climax of shattering power.

A few other incidents of the festival remain in my memory. It was, I believe, after the second rehearsal that Walter Toscanini invited me to visit his father in his dressing room, where we found him radiant. Grasping my coat lapels and giving me a little shake, he said: "My dear Haggin—today I can hope." At a later rehearsal, after devoting considerable time to securing clear articulation of some fast passage-work for strings in the *Leonore* No. 2 Overture, he stopped, undecided, then turned around: "Rachmaninov," he called out, "can you hear?" "I can hear," came the reply from somewhere behind me in the darkened hall; and reassured, Toscanini went on. After the performance of the Ninth Symphony that concluded the festival I went backstage, where I found a huge crowd outside the door of the greenroom. As I stood there Bruno Zirato, at that time assistant manager of the Philharmonic, came out of the room and cast his eye over the crowd; and when he saw me he signaled to me and took me into the room, where Toscanini—wrapped in a blue terry-cloth jacket and fanning himself—stood smiling in the middle of another crowd. When I got near him I thanked him; and he said: "You were not tired to come to all rehearsals?" "If you weren't, why should I be?" I answered. A moment later he asked: "*Qu'est-ce qu'il fait là?*" *—motioning toward Walter, who was surrounded by youngsters in uniform. I looked over their shoulders and reported to Toscanini that Walter was taking the names and addresses of the boys who were

* "What is he doing there?"

leaving their programs to be autographed; and he nodded, smiling.

A couple of months later, however, when with other members of the press I attended the final NBC Symphony rehearsal for the American première of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, I was exhausted after only the first half-hour of the pretentiously inflated banalities. "In this symphony I hear suffering of Russian people," he explained two or three years later, when another symphony of Shostakovich had appeared in which he said he did not hear anything of interest.

By the autumn of 1942 Toscanini had heard the test pressings of his Philadelphia Orchestra recordings and had been dissatisfied with certain sides, which it was expected he would re-record with the orchestra. (But the long Petrillo ban on recording intervened to prevent the remaking of these sides; in addition the processing of the recordings in incorrectly constituted solutions had resulted in many of the sides being afflicted with noisy ticks; and these were made more disturbing by the excessively low volume-level of the recording. As a result of all these things the recordings—of some of Toscanini's finest performances—were never issued.) I was bringing *Music on Records* up to date for a new edition; and since at this time it was expected that the recordings would eventually be issued (the Berlioz *Queen Mab* was in fact already scheduled for release), I wanted to hear them and list them as being in preparation. I wrote to Walter Toscanini, who was with Victor in Camden, asking if I might hear the test pressings; and he an-

swered that he was going to be in New York the following Monday and would be glad to play for me some that were at his father's home. Would I come to the Villa Pauline between eight-thirty and nine.

The Villa Pauline, in the Riverdale section of New York, was the house Toscanini had lived in since 1937. Shortly after my visit there in September 1942 he moved to the house now occupied by the British delegate to the United Nations; but a few years later he moved back to the Villa Pauline, which remained his American home until his death.

The living room of the Villa Pauline was a large central hall on the ground floor from which a large stairway led to the upper floors. In it, in addition to Walter Toscanini, I found Mme. Toscanini and a young man with whom she was conversing across a small table. She rose to greet me, went to the foot of the stairway, and called softly: "Tosca"; then she returned to the table and her conversation with the young man, which they continued for some time, paying no attention to what else went on in the room. And in a moment Toscanini came down the stairs quickly, a book on world government in one hand, a pince-nez in the other, a smile of greeting on his face.

I had brought with me a recent Victor recording of somebody else's performance of Smetana's *Die Moldau*—excellent-sounding on my phonograph—as a check on the sound of Toscanini's equipment; and I asked Walter to play this first. While I listened to the sound Toscanini stood listening to the performance; and after a few moments he said to Walter: "Get my *Moldau*." Turning to me, he said: "I put

trumpet at the end because is not clear only with trombones." When Walter put on the record of a broadcast of *Die Moldau* Toscanini stood not just listening but conducting the performance in every detail; and at the end he directed my attention to the trumpets' strengthening of the melodic line. From this I learned that although Toscanini adhered strictly to the composer's text he didn't hesitate to correct what seemed to him a miscalculation in orchestration that kept something from being heard clearly. (It was surprising to learn, some time later, of the many such changes in *La Mer*. "I tell Debussy are many things not clear; and he say is all right to make changes.")

Toscanini then asked Walter to play the test pressing of an NBC Symphony recording of the Prelude to *Tristan und Isolde* that pleased him with its clarity and sonority; but I found the brilliance of the violins excessive and unpleasant; and when one of the sides of the Philadelphia *Death and Transfiguration* was played I found the violins harsh and the bass too heavy. In reply to my inquiry Walter told me the machine was being played with maximum range of treble and maximum intensity of bass; and I suggested trying the next side of *Death and Transfiguration* with treble range and bass reduced somewhat. This made the violins lustrous and sweet, and changed the bass from a huge confused rumble to sounds that were clearly defined and in correct proportion; and when I said I liked this better Toscanini said he did too. I then asked to hear the *Tristan* Prelude with my settings of treble and bass, and found the sound of the violins greatly improved; but Toscanini this time liked the earlier sound better. However, my settings

were retained for the recordings that were played for me.

One was the Philadelphia *La Mer*, which Toscanini, as before, listened to standing and conducting the performance. At the end of the first movement, his face registering his delight, he exclaimed: "Is like reading the score!"—which clearly was his idea of what a performance should be. Thus he stated one of his basic principles—that whatever was printed in the score must be audible in the performance. And a moment later, listening to the second movement of *La Mer*, he cried out in anger at not hearing one of the woodwinds, and made Walter stop the record.

When we came to the Philadelphia *Queen Mab* Toscanini's face clouded, and after asking Walter to bring him the Wotton book on Berlioz he told me what was troubling him. He was about to open the New York Philharmonic's season with a performance of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in its entirety; and in preparing for it he had again come up against the problem, for him, of the placing and removal of the strings' mutes in the *Love Scene*. "A man write to me—" he said, leaving his statement unfinished as Walter handed him the Wotton book. "This man," he said, pointing to Wotton's name, "is musician or is musicologist?" And as I was about to answer he went on: "I think must be musician"—making clear in this way his estimate of musicologists. He opened the book to a passage on page 186, in which he had underlined many words, and read aloud Wotton's criticism of the reasoning which had led the editors of the big Breitkopf edition to change the original direction given on page 151 of the Eulenburg miniature score—the direction to place mutes on the second

violins, which the Breitkopf edition extended to violas and cellos. Then Toscanini showed me in the Eulenburg score his solution of the problem created, it turned out, not by any lack of explicitness and clarity in Berlioz's directions but by Toscanini's inability to believe that they really represented Berlioz's objectives. On page 147, where Berlioz removed mutes from the cellos, Toscanini removed them also from the violas; on page 151, where Berlioz added mutes on the second violins to those still on the violas, Toscanini placed them on the second violins, violas and cellos; hence on page 161, where Berlioz removed them from the violas, Toscanini removed them also from the cellos; and instead of removing them from the second violins on page 162 as Berlioz did, Toscanini removed them in the first measure on page 161 because at this point the second violins played the same melody as the unmuted firsts and at the same dynamic level. (The man he said had written to him was Jacques Barzun; but actually it was Toscanini who—encountering Barzun's name in the preface of the Wotton book, and interested in what Barzun might contribute on the subject—had originally written to Barzun. And in his gigantically ostentatious book on Berlioz several years later Barzun wrote that Toscanini had explained his solution of the problem "during a conversation sought"—Barzun informed us—"by him." Toscanini's comment on this was a shake of his head and "Vanity, vanity!")

I remember the playing of only one more recording that night—of the 1941 performance of the finale of *Die Götterdämmerung* with Helen Traubel. I no longer recall what brought it to Toscanini's mind, and remember only

his saying: "You must hear *Immolation Scene* with Traubel. Ah, *che bella voce, che bella voce!*" * And he continued to exclaim in pleasure as he listened to what was in fact some of the most beautiful singing of Traubel's career.

A few days later the rehearsals of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* began. Toscanini had played three instrumental sections of the work—the one beginning with *Romeo Alone* and ending with *Great Festivity at the Capulets'*; the *Love Scene*; and the *Queen Mab*—a number of times before; but this performance of the entire work, the first in my lifetime, provided a first hearing of two other extraordinary pieces of music: *Juliet's Funeral Procession* and *Romeo in the Vault of the Capulets*. All this music represented not only Berlioz's remarkable musical powers but their susceptibility to poetic stimulation; and Toscanini's approach to it was at all times by way of the poetic situation: "Here speaks the prince," he said of the recitative-like passage for the brass in the *Introduction*, which he worked on for the quality and weight of sound, the inflection, the portamento, that made it the pronouncement of an angered ruler. At the point where Romeo's rush—*Allegro agitato e disperato*—into the Capulet vault broke off, Toscanini's hushing outspread arms and "*Grand silence!*" created the silence of the vault in which were heard the soft, solemn antiphonal chords of brass, woodwinds and strings. And concerning the anguished phrases later in this section he reminded the orchestra: "*DI-SPER-A-TO! You are all DI-SPER-A-TI!*"

* "Ah, what a beautiful voice, what a beautiful voice!"

After the second performance on Friday afternoon I went backstage; but I had stopped to talk to a friend, and when I got to the greenroom I found everyone gone and the door of the dressing room closed. At that moment the door opened and Toscanini came out dressed for the street and followed by Mme. Toscanini. His mind was still on Berlioz's music; and when I spoke of how extraordinary *Romeo in the Vault of the Capulets* was, he answered with an intense "Ye-e-es!" and added: "One finds in Berlioz's scores some things one cannot understand or imagine—until one hears them from the orchestra; then one hears they are right and beautiful."

For his second week's concerts with the Philharmonic Toscanini's program comprised Haydn's Symphony No. 99 and Shostakovitch's Seventh; and on the morning of the Sunday of the final concert I went up to Riverdale to speak to Walter Toscanini about something. His father had already moved to the other house; and while I was talking to Walter in the large living room off the central hall, the door opened and Mme. Toscanini, in a dressing gown, looked in but withdrew hastily when she saw me. Shortly afterward the door opened again; and this time it was Toscanini, in slippers and a brocaded silk dressing gown over his undershirt and trousers, and with the small score of Haydn's No. 99 in his hand. "You can see," he said, opening the score to the beginning of the first movement after the slow introduction, and pointing, "is written *Vivace assai*; but X— play too slow. Is dilettante!" And from this excessively slow tempo he went on to others, of which I now remember only one—that of Pamina's "*Ach, ich fühl's*" in *The Magic*

Flute. Clasping his hands as he acted Pamina's agitation, he exclaimed: "Pamina say 'I lose my Tamino! Where my Tamino!' Must be Andante, but is always Adagio!"

"*Senti,*" * said Walter at one point, taking out a handkerchief and patting his father's face with it. "Why are you perspiring?"

"Because I am warm!" Toscanini answered vehemently. "When I talk about music I am not cold!"

A little later Walter told him that the master of the first side of the 1936 recording of Beethoven's Seventh couldn't be used any longer, and Victor asked him to listen to a pressing from the master of one of his other "takes" of that side. As Walter was putting the record on the turntable Toscanini said to me: "I never like first side. Is too slow." And when the sound of the suggested replacement began to emerge from the speaker his face lighted up and he exclaimed: "So is correct!" Astonished by all this, I asked: "But who chose the old side?" Toscanini apparently didn't hear me; and it was Walter who, standing behind his father, pointed at him with a grin. Only later did I remember Toscanini's statement in Philadelphia that the 1936 recordings had been passed on by a committee of Gilman, Betti and Chotzinoff; which meant that Walter was mistaken.

Eventually Toscanini left the room; and when I had finished talking with Walter and was about to leave, his father reappeared, dressed for the day, and invited me upstairs to see the three picture views that were framed by the three windows of his study. We went out onto the

* Listen

terrace; and some point connected with his imminent NBC broadcast of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* came up that caused him to speak with sorrow about Gershwin who had been "very *simpatico*."

Toscanini also conducted the Philharmonic in a Red Cross concert devoted to Wagner, late in November, with Traubel again as soloist in the *Tristan* and *Götterdämmerung* finales. I remember him, at the beginning of the first rehearsal, working patiently to achieve the accuracy, the balance, the radiance of the opening chords of the *Lohengrin* Prelude; and I remember him, at the end of the last rehearsal, in a rage about something the orchestra hadn't done as he wished in the *Götterdämmerung* finale. When this rehearsal was over, Walter invited me to visit his father in his dressing room, where I expected to find him still raging—instead of which I found him seated on a sofa, his powerful torso bare, the sweat dripping off the tip of his nose, and a look of pleasure on his face as he searched eagerly in the full score of *Die Götterdämmerung* open in his lap. "I am sure," he exclaimed, "Brünnhilde is very unhappy. . . . Yes"—having found what he was looking for, and pointing to it—" 'Verraten!' * *She is 'verraten'!*" And reading further: "Yes . . . 'Alles, Alles weiss ich.' ** Yes. . . ."

Shortly before this he conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in Mozart's G-minor, the Overture and Bacchanale

* Betrayed

** "All, all do I understand."

of Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, and the Musorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*. I heard the repetition of the concert in New York on November 24, and was surprised by the change in my feeling about the performance of the G-minor. It had always impressed me as too impassioned, and to the performance issued in Victor M-631 in 1939 I had even applied the terms 'tumultuous' and 'ferocious'; but the performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra I now found to be completely and satisfyingly right; and when I went back to the 1939 Victor recording and also to an off-the-air recording of the last Philharmonic performance in 1936, I was astonished to hear the same tempos and the same powerful phrasing and shaping. It was clearly I who had changed (and I discovered this to be true also when I went back to the Beecham performance of the symphony in Columbia M-316, which I had previously considered excellent, and was shocked now by the inappropriate jauntiness of the opening statements—especially the effect of the sharp clipping off of their conclusions—and by the expressive inadequacy of the treatment of the entire first movement).

But on the other hand, listening at this time to the performances of Brahms's symphonies in an NBC Brahms cycle, I knew that in some instances Toscanini had changed in the course of years. Remembering clearly the swift and light-footed progression of the first movement of the Third when he had first played it here in 1929, I was struck by the breadth and weight of the performance now; and there was a similar change in the first movement of the Fourth. These were the first such changes I was aware of in Tosca-

nini's performances; but others as striking, and more significant, were to reveal themselves a couple of years later.

The Brahms cycle included the *German Requiem*; and before the final rehearsal there was the pre-rehearsal hubbub of the orchestra tuning and practicing and the Westminster Choir warming up on syllables like "mi-mi-mi-mi-mi"—all of which Toscanini seemed oblivious of as he talked animatedly with Samuel Chotzinoff, pointing now in this direction at the stage and now in that. At last Toscanini finished with Chotzinoff and went up onto the stage to begin the rehearsal; and it had proceeded for some time when, in a rage at some failure of the chorus, he shouted: "Is not enough to sing 'mi-mi-mi-mi-mi'!" Evidently he was oblivious to no sound.

Several other NBC Symphony performances and rehearsals of that season remain in my memory. The Verdi program of January 31, 1943, offered the exciting experiences of performances which revealed the dramatic power, eloquence and nobility of the early music from *Nabucco* and *I Lombardi* as well as the more familiar *Forza del Destino* and *La Traviata*. The first rehearsal was unprecedently late in starting, with the concertmaster Mischakoff's chair conspicuously vacant. At last Mischakoff appeared, followed by Toscanini; and the reason for the delay became evident when Toscanini began to conduct the long instrumental introduction to the Trio from *I Lombardi*, of which the violin solo was played by Mischakoff in an Italian-opera vocal style that he hadn't learned in the conservatory in his youth.

Another Verdi program on July 25 offered the additional

exciting experiences of hearing familiar matters like "O *don fatale*" from *Don Carlo*, "*Pace, pace, mio Dio*" from *La Forza del Destino*, "*Eri tu*" from *Un Ballo in Maschera*, and the entire fourth act of *Rigoletto* emerge "as fresh and glistening as creation itself" in performances in which every detail of the accurately and beautifully played orchestral part was in active expressive relation to what was being sung; the accurately and expressively shaped vocal phrases fitted precisely into the orchestral contexts; and the progression of integrated vocal and orchestral parts was clear in outline and texture, coherent in shape, continuous in tension. (The *Rigoletto* act—with Jan Peerce, Gertrude Ribla, Nan Merriman, Francesco Valentino and Nicola Moscona—was Toscanini's first performance of opera in New York since 1915; and he repeated it—with Zinka Milanov and Leonard Warren in place of Ribla and Valentino—at his Red Cross concert in Madison Square Garden on May 25, 1944.)

The same impression of the familiar pieces being revealed as though newly created was produced at the rehearsal of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* for a Carnegie Hall concert on April 25, and at the rehearsals of a program of "pop" numbers broadcast on April 4. The members of the orchestra sat smiling in pleasure at the phrasing and pacing of the Overture to *Zampa*, the best-known Boccherini Minuet, the *Dance of the Hours*, Liszt's Second Hungarian Rhapsody, *The Stars and Stripes Forever*; and they applauded the exquisite inflection of the long melody of the Haydn Serenade from the Quartet Op. 3 No. 5.

This, I believe, was the first of such programs of "pop"

numbers, which must have impressed less sophisticated listeners as well as the members of the NBC Symphony and myself. That is, it seemed to me that a musically unsophisticated person, listening to these pieces that he knew well, would inevitably be struck by the things that were different about them this time—that listening, for example, to *The Stars and Stripes Forever* he would notice not only the general liveliness and buoyancy but the subordinate melodies or accompanying figures that he had never before heard so clearly outlined and so beautifully modeled; and that in this way he might get an idea of the differences that were possible in performances, and of the particular qualities of Toscanini's performances, which previously he might have thought people only pretended they heard.

At a rehearsal for the June 20 broadcast of lighter classics the tempo of the first part of Debussy's *Prélude à L'Après-midi d'un faune* was strikingly faster than that of other conductors' performances; and happening to be following with the score I discovered what was behind it. Debussy's direction for the tempo of the first part was "Very moderate"; for the middle part it was "First rate of movement"; for the return of the first part it was "Movement of the beginning"; and whereas the usual practice was to play the first part more slowly than the rest, Toscanini obeyed Debussy's directions to maintain the one pace throughout by bringing the first part up to the tempo of the rest. (Years earlier, when he had first played Brahms's First Symphony in New York, he had similarly decided that the Poco sostenuto of the introduction to the first movement must be the same as the Poco sostenuto of the similar passage at

the end of the movement. This turned out to be too fast for the proper effect of the introduction; nevertheless in all the three or four performances of the symphony that year Toscanini stuck to this consistency at the cost of effectiveness; but when he played the work again in a later season he took the introduction to the first movement at its traditionally slower pace.)

And there were, finally, the rehearsals of *La Mer* for the broadcast of April 11. At the first, Toscanini worked on the detail of the first two movements; then, finding himself with only a few minutes left, he led the orchestra straight through the final movement in a breathtakingly beautiful and effective performance that caused the orchestra to applaud him at the end. The next day he perfected the detail of this movement and then went through the entire work in a way that impelled the orchestra, at the end, to burst into a storm of applause in appreciation of the imaginative insight and technical powers that had integrated all the bits of color and figuration and all the nuances of tempo into the coherent and magnificent form in sound. It was on this occasion that the young violinist exclaimed to me: "You can quote me on this: we come here to go to school!"

On February 6, 1944, Toscanini conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra in a Pension Fund concert; and I went to Philadelphia for the last two rehearsals. The Beethoven program comprised the *Egmont* Overture, the Septet, the *Pastoral* Symphony and the *Leonore* No. 2 Overture; and at the first of the rehearsals, at which the symphony was worked on, I was bowled over by what the phrasing of the orchestra's

great solo flute, William Kincaid, and solo oboe, Marcel Tabuteau, made of the passage of bird calls at the end of the second movement. ("Well," a New York musician replied when I spoke of this, "after all, they've been doing it together for twenty-five years.") The performance of the symphony seemed very fine to me; but after the rehearsal a member of the orchestra whom I knew remarked: "I'm a little surprised at the things he's letting pass," referring to details of execution which an orchestra player's ear would notice but other listeners' would not.

At the final rehearsal the next morning, after a little more work on parts of the symphony, the *Leonore* No. 2 was done; then came the break, and as some of the men started to leave the stage Tabuteau called them back. Turning to Toscanini, he told him of the pleasure it had been for the orchestra to play with him, of its gratitude for his coming to conduct this concert—in token of which it presented him with this scroll; and he handed it to Toscanini who at once, in childlike curiosity, unrolled it and began to read it as Tabuteau continued to speak. Then Toscanini spoke briefly but warmly in reply, ending with the statement that nothing in the future could be certain but "consider me always at your disposition," which the orchestra applauded. And then he went to his dressing room, while the men who weren't needed for the rehearsal of the Septet packed up their instruments and left.

It was therefore in a very happy atmosphere that the rehearsal of the Septet began after the break, with young Samuel Mayes, the first cellist, swaying happily from side to side as he sawed away on his instrument in the Minuet.

But suddenly the sky clouded: in the variation movement a fast passage for the violins was repeated but did not satisfy Toscanini; it was repeated again and still did not satisfy him; he called now on one or two desks of the first violins ("You! you! I hear you!") to repeat it; and then the storm broke. It became evident that he was raging not just about what had gone wrong in the Septet but about all the things he had let pass in the symphony; as for the passage in the Septet, "I play this piece with NBC," he shouted at the violins, "and you are not so wonderful!—no!—you are not so wonderful!—no!—NO!"—a shockingly cruel thing to say to a group which actually *was* very wonderful (its playing in the *Pastoral* had a beauty and finish which the NBC Symphony's did not have in a performance a few weeks later) and which, in the years since Stokowski's departure, had been fighting with gallantry and success to maintain itself as the great orchestra he had made it. The men sat in impassive silence until Toscanini's anger had spent itself and he resumed the rehearsal. At the end of the piece he remained standing on the podium, silent, motionless, brooding; and suddenly Tabuteau was at his side, with an arm affectionately on his shoulder, asking him if he would like another rehearsal of the strings just before the concert that evening. Toscanini brightened: Yes, he would like it; the players nodded their heads vigorously in agreement. And so the rehearsal ended.

I am sure Tabuteau's gesture of affection was genuine. It is my impression that intelligent orchestra players didn't regard Toscanini's rages as mere self-indulgence by a man who could be reasonable and patient but felt privileged to

be unreasonable and impatient. I think they understood that he was, in his relation to music, a man obsessed and possessed, and that such a man was not rational and reasonable—not in music nor in anything else; and some of them may have perceived what that remarkably perceptive critic, W. J. Turner, spoke of in a review of Toscanini's concerts in London in 1935. As he had sat watching Toscanini, Turner had been "suddenly reminded of Berlioz's remark, 'Do you think I make music for my pleasure?' I am certain that it is not a pleasure for Toscanini to conduct, but rather that he suffers. It is because of his extreme musical sensibility and intense concentration. Here lies the essence of his superiority." I thought this perception of Toscanini's suffering true even before Toscanini confirmed it in a statement years later. Not self-indulgence, then, but extreme musical sensibility, intense concentration, suffering—these were some of the causes of the rages: "Put your blood!" he roared once at a rehearsal of an insignificant little Italian piece. "I put *my* blood!" And they were reasons for intelligent orchestra players to forgive him, as they did.

Late in October 1944 I wrote Toscanini that I was having a copy of my new book, *Music for the Man Who Enjoys "Hamlet,"* sent to him; and that I had thought he wouldn't care for a published dedication, but wanted him to know the book was dedicated to him privately in acknowledgment of my debt to him. To this I received a reply dated November 3, in which he said that I had guessed his feeling correctly—that the dedication of the book on its front page would not

have been as dear to him as it was now that it came silently from my mind and heart; and from the bottom of his heart came his best thanks. As for my statement about acknowledgment of my debt to him, he said it made him blush, as he had blushed that day when he had listened to the recording of the *Eroica* that had been made a few years ago. Then he asked when he would have the pleasure of seeing me in Riverdale. He hoped it would be soon—possibly the next week: he wanted very badly to ask me something about my book. And he ended with best good wishes and very cordially.

The recording of Beethoven's *Eroica* he referred to was Victor M-765, which had been made during a broadcast in November 1939; and he had listened to it in preparation for the performance he broadcast on November 5, 1944. The recorded sound of the 1939 performance was the unresonantly dry, flat, hard, tight sound of Studio 8H filled with an audience; the performance itself was one of his greatest. But it was a performance in his earlier expansive style marked by great elasticity of tempo—one which, for rhetorical emphasis, paused for an instant after each of the two forceful chords that claim attention at the beginning of the first movement of the *Eroica*, and which, in the subsequent course of the movement, slowed down momentarily to introduce a new section or broadened out for a climax. And the performance of November 5, 1944, was a striking illustration of the important change in Toscanini's style since 1939—the change away from the expansiveness and toward a swifter, tauter, subtler simplicity involving only

slight modification of the set tempo. * But for Toscanini the change was not just a change from one way of playing to another: it was a change to a right way, to the only right way, and from a way, therefore, that had been shamefully wrong. (I might suggest in passing that this habit of mind, rather than the jealousy he was accused of, was responsible for some of his unfavorable estimates of other conductors. His intense conviction at a particular moment that *this* was the right way to conduct a phrase or a movement made all other ways—his own in the past, another conductor's now—appear to him shamefully wrong.)

As for the tendency to swifter, tauter simplicity, it was not without exceptions in the reverse direction: the 1939 Beethoven cycle that included the expansive *Eroica* also included a Ninth whose first movement was faster and less expansive than the first movement in the February 1938 performance; but the first movement of the Ninth recorded in 1952 was slower, and at certain climactic points more powerfully expansive, than the one of 1939; and the *Tristan* Prelude and Finale recorded in 1952 also was enormously slower and more powerfully expansive than the one of 1942.

* Let me make it clear that this later simplification of style was something different from the setting of a single tempo for an entire movement, which I spoke of on page 19. In both the 1939 and the 1944 performances Toscanini set a single tempo for the first movement and again for the second; but in the earlier performance the modifications of the set tempo were expansive, whereas in the later one they were subtle. And I might add that of two performances in the same tempo, one—because of the particular state of Toscanini's mind and emotions at the moment—might exhibit strikingly more or strikingly less power than the other, or might exhibit a tenseness and rigidity which the other did not.

I might add that on occasion the swifter tautness was carried to the point of excessively fast rigidity—as in the Haydn *Surprise* Symphony recorded in 1953; but to this I would have to add that within a week or two of the Haydn performance Toscanini recorded the relaxed performances of Schubert's C-major, Dvořák's *New World* and Rossini's Overture to *William Tell*. Also, the earlier slower and more expansive performance often was more effective than the later faster and simpler one; but not always: the *Eroica* of November 1944, February 1949, and December 1953 had hair-raising power in their simpler style. And it is interesting that the Scherzo of Mendelssohn's Octet recorded in 1945 was at once faster, more relaxed, and more brilliantly effective than the one in the 1947 broadcast performance issued on Victor LM-1869.

I wrote to Toscanini that it would be a great pleasure to visit him whenever he had time; and a few days after the *Eroica* broadcast I received a note apologizing for the delay—he had been very busy—and suggesting that I come up the following afternoon. When I arrived I found him—ruddy, bright-eyed, genial, his after-lunch toothpick still in his mouth—sitting in a sunny corner of the living room with Mme. Toscanini, who was sewing or crocheting. He rose to welcome me as Mme. Toscanini smiled her greeting; then he led me to an easy chair, sat down on the sofa next to it, and leaned forward to slap my knee as he exclaimed with a smile: "Always fighting!"

Then, "I want to ask you a question about your book. I am stupid in such things. How do you use instrument for

measuring?" He was referring to the little cardboard ruler that had been provided with the book to measure places on phonograph records where details I mentioned could be heard. And it was true—as the scratched records and damaged styli testified—that he was very awkward in his dealings with records. We went to the phonograph, and I showed him how I used the ruler to find a place on one of the Victor *Eroica* records. "Is there much difference in records?" he asked; and I showed him in the book the differences in the measurements of the several recordings of the *Eroica*. "And you did all this work!" he exclaimed. "It must be much time." And apparently the measuring procedure still seemed formidable to him, for he said: "I will ask my son; I am stupid in such things."

His mind now reverted to the preceding Sunday's performance of the *Eroica*; and he went to the piano. "I listen to record: the first *accords* are still played with pauses. Sunday for the first time I have courage to play in tempo—so:" and he played the two opening chords in strict tempo. And concerning this tempo: "Forty years ago when I play *Eroica* the first time I hear German conductors—I hear Richter—and I think I must play this German music as they play it—so:" and he demonstrated their slow tempo in the first movement. "But when I play this symphony later I play more and more as I feel; and now I have courage at last to take right tempo—so:" and he demonstrated his tempo of the preceding Sunday, characterizing it, as he played, as "easy . . . easy . . ." "Also in second movement: always I am afraid and play bass part first two times so:" and he played the first *ap-poggiatura* note on the beat. "Why—when Beethoven write

third time so:" and he played the appoggiatura notes in advance of the beat. "Now I tell *bassi*: 'Play first times so:' " and he played the appoggiatura notes in advance of the beat. "Because Beethoven is very exact—but even Beethoven sometimes write different"; and he cited the pizzicato note that Beethoven wrote now as an eighth-note, now as a quarter, now as a half.

"Germans play everything too slow," he said. The second movement of Beethoven's Seventh, for example: "I have courage to play so:" and he demonstrated his faster-than-usual Allegretto. "Rodzinski play so:" and he demonstrated the slower tempo. "I asked him: 'My dear, why you do this?' He say: 'Is *marcia funebre*.' I say: 'No, is not *marcia funebre*; is so:'" and he demonstrated. "But he play again the same way."

The slow movement of Beethoven's Second was another example; after which Toscanini commented: "Beethoven write only one Adagio—in Ninth Symphony. He put metronome mark 60—3—no, 60; for second part he put 63. Is not much difference; *allóra* * I make so—and so:" and he demonstrated the two tempos of the alternating sections. "But Furtwängler make so:" and he demonstrated Furtwängler's slower tempos.

In Mozart also 2/4 was converted into 4/8, Andante into Adagio. "All German conductors play Mozart Andante too slow"; and he illustrated first with the Andante of the Symphony in E flat, then with the Andante of the *Jupiter*, playing the latter first as an Adagio with dragging accompa-

* then

niment eighths, then as a flowing Andante. Concerning the G-minor he had a different complaint: "When I hear G-minor from German conductors the first time, was so:" and he played a jauntily phrased statement of the opening theme of the first movement. But with the Overture to *Don Giovanni* it was again "Always Mozart is too slow": the introduction of the overture should be in the same tempo as when it accompanied the Commendatore's singing at the end of the opera. And there was a difference between the $2/4$ time of *Don Giovanni* and the $2/4$ of *The Magic Flute*: the right tempo for *Là ci darem la mano* was too slow for Papageno's aria. "When I conduct *Flauto Magico* in Salzburg I am afraid about my tempi; but Rosé [the old concertmaster of the Vienna State Opera Orchestra] say once 'At last!' I tell Bruno Walter 'You will not like my tempi in *Flauto Magico*.' He say 'Is very interesting'; but afterward he make again slow tempi. . . . All German conductors play too slow! Muck! Was terrible! Orchestra [the Boston Symphony] was wonderful. But he make program: Haydn Symphony in *re*—the last [No. 104], Mozart [Jupiter?] and Beethoven [First?]; and everything so *slow*! Muck was Beckmesser of conductors!"

I think it was somewhere in all this that Toscanini referred to the excessively slow tempo not of a conductor but of a pianist. "When Serkin play with me Mozart Concerto in B flat [K. 595, which Serkin performed with the New York Philharmonic in 1936] I say I know Schnabel's slow tempo in *Larghetto*, but I am sure this music should be *alla breve*. And once Serkin send me from Europe photo-

graph of Mozart manuscript of Larghetto: is written *alla breve!*"

Something reminded him of what he had been reading about Wagner's conducting. "You know this life of Wagner by—by—by—" He couldn't remember the name, and went to get the book, which turned out to be the W. Ashton Ellis biography. "You have not read this? Ee-e-e! It describe Wagner's conducting in London . . . is very interesting. Wagner make something which I cannot imagine: Largo in *passage* [the French word] in first movement of *Jupiter* Symphony; but where? Slow movement he play without *sordini* . . . he must play slow movement like Germans—too slow. He make big ritard in last part of Minuet; but where? Is clear, Wagner conduct *a piacere*; * but I cannot imagine what they say he do." And he insisted on my taking the book to read.

Before I left I inscribed his copy of my book with "To Arturo Toscanini" and my signature. And a few weeks later I received his Christmas card, which he had inscribed in similar fashion to me. The printed portion of the card had on one page a photograph of Toscanini looking at a framed picture of Beethoven in his hand, and underneath the first measures of the Andante maestoso section in the finale of the Ninth, with the words *Seid umschlungen, Millionen! Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!*, copied out by Toscanini; and on the opposite page his handwritten Christmas and New Year greeting and signature.

* with freedom

The *Eroica* of November 5, 1944, was part of a Beethoven cycle which included the Piano Concertos Nos. 1, 3 and 4, and which was brought to an especially notable conclusion with a performance of *Fidelio*. Toscanini didn't often play concertos, and this because of his way of regarding and treating them. A Beethoven or Mozart concerto usually is not something which a conductor puts on a program for itself, and for which he then engages a suitable pianist. It is, rather, something he has to play for a soloist who has been engaged for his box-office drawing power, and something the conductor has little interest in, since its purpose is to show off the soloist, not himself. As a result the performance usually is the product of only enough rehearsal—sometimes a mere single run-through—for the soloist's and orchestra's playing to be geared together in time. A concerto performance in which the orchestral part has been carefully worked out is rare; and rarest of all is the kind of performance Schnabel insisted on—in which the solo and orchestral parts were integrated in every detail of phrasing and style (mostly *his* phrasing and style). Now there were exceptional instances in which Toscanini too began with the soloist—one being Myra Hess's appearance with the NBC Symphony in November 1946, which was his salute to her in recognition of her war work. But in most instances he began with the concerto; and in all instances he treated it as something worth playing for itself: listening to the performance one heard a carefully rehearsed orchestral part in which familiar phrases acquired amazingly new contours and significance, and counterpoints and figurations previously unheard in the mass of sound emerged with

startling clarity and impact from the newly transparent textures; and one heard all these things related in a continuous progression which was built up into a coherent and powerful structure. It was an exciting experience; and it remained that even when the structure was built up around nothing—i.e., the characterless flow of sounds produced by Ania Dorfman in Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 1. Or around something as alien in style as Artur Rubinstein's playing in No. 3. I still remember the occasion when Iturbi, in performances of Mozart's Concertos K.466 and 467 with Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic, was impelled by the orchestra's powerfully phrased playing to match it with a strong inflection of phrase that was in striking contrast to his usual salon-music style in Mozart. But the hair-raising power of the orchestral part of Beethoven's No. 3 had no such effect on Rubinstein, who played with his usual on-the-surface brilliance and elegance, and gave the florid melodic passages in the slow movement Chopinesque inflections. Only Serkin's playing in No. 4—though often unimpressive in its mere fluency, in comparison with Schnabel's strongly inflected playing—had the right over-all character and sufficient vitality to fit well into Toscanini's orchestral framework.

We come, then, to the matter of Toscanini's strange choices of soloists—strange in view of the reason he once gave me for playing concertos infrequently: that he could not operate as a mere accompanist, but had to be satisfied with the soloist's playing of *his* part. In illustration he cited the case of Ossip Gabrilowitsch. In 1935 Toscanini conducted a Brahms cycle in which Gabrilowitsch was an-

nounced as the soloist in the Piano Concerto No. 2, a famous specialty of his. A few weeks before the date of the performance I was surprised to see Toscanini sitting in front of me at a concert at which Gabrilowitsch played the same Brahms concerto with the National Orchestral Association; subsequently the Philharmonic announced the cancellation of the work because of Gabrilowitsch's illness; and now Toscanini confirmed my suspicion that he had canceled the work because he hadn't been able to accept Gabrilowitsch's way of playing it. Yet he *had* been able to accept Rubinstein's way of playing the Beethoven No. 3. Nor was this the only instance. His own taste had been evident in the delicacy and purity of Remo Bolognini's style in a marvelously light and winged Philharmonic performance of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in the thirties; yet in a performance of this work in the spring of 1944 he had accepted the pretentiously mannered and sentimentally distorted phrasing of Heifetz. He was fanatical about setting the right tempo, about maintaining it once it was set; and his strong convictions about this made him inflexible; yet he accepted Myra Hess's slowing down of the first movement of Beethoven's No. 3 after the orchestral introduction, and a slower tempo in the second movement than he had taken in the performance with Rubinstein. Clearly, Toscanini exhibited most of the time a taste, in the exercise of which he was rigorous and unyielding; but there was occasional inconsistency in the taste itself, and occasional yielding in its exercise. If I am correct in my impression that Rubinstein was not one of the close friends, his case illustrates inconsistency in the taste itself; but the cases of friends like Dorfman and

Heifetz, and of Horowitz, who was married to Toscanini's daughter Wanda (and whose mannered phrasing one would have expected Toscanini not to like) appear to demonstrate that Toscanini's taste could be by-passed by way of his heart. And with Hess his convictions seem to have yielded to her war record.

So with *Fidelio*. Nobody could fuss more than Toscanini did about getting the exactly right singer for a part in an opera; but the Leonore of the broadcast *Fidelio* was Rose Bampton, whose monotonously shrill upper range was not exactly right for this part, and who marred the performance by breaking on the final high note of *Komm' Hoffnung* (a later recording of the aria was substituted in Victor LM-6025), but who was a close friend of the Toscanini family. And I must assume that someone put in an influential word for another singer whose badly accented German made him grossly unfit for his participation in the performance.

What it comes to is that Toscanini, aside from being a great musician, was a human being with the inconsistencies and contradictions—which is to say with the fallibilities and weaknesses—of any other human being. This is hardly surprising; but people who expect, understand and accept the fallibilities and weaknesses in a businessman or an engineer were surprised—and even shocked and outraged—by them in Toscanini, believing apparently that a man who was as great an artist as he must be perfect in all other respects. But I contend that in addition to the reasons for the Toscaninis of this world to behave no better than the businessmen and engineers, there are reasons for them to behave even worse. Not only are their traits of personality

and character, like those of businessmen and engineers, conditioned, developed and distorted by the ordinary experiences with family, friends, enemies, teachers, employers; but their lives are subjected to the additional distorting strains of their intensive training and their careers; and sometimes they begin with the unbalance that makes possible a fanatical dedication and concentration during long years of training and then during the years of artistic achievement. If Toscanini had not been, in relation to music, a man obsessed and possessed, willing to endure the suffering caused by his extreme musical sensibility and concentration, he would not have subjected people to the unreasonable, inconsiderate, bad-tempered, sometimes downright cruel behavior described in Chotzinoff's *Toscanini: An Intimate Portrait*; but we would not have had his performances. And having had the performances, we owe him not only gratitude for the experiences he gave us and for his willingness to endure what made those experiences possible, but the same understanding and tolerance of his behavior as we give the businessman and the engineer.

It may have occurred to some to wonder why Rubinstein and why not Schnabel? Toscanini did speak of Schnabel—not on the occasion when he explained his not playing concertos, but on another. Sitting at the piano, he said: "I must ask you—I do not understand why you write so about Schnabel. In Beethoven G-major Concerto [I had written about the piano's opening statement being made by Schnabel 'quietly, deeply, spaciouly meditative'] he play so:" and Toscanini astonished me by playing the piano's opening

statement with gross distentions that hadn't the slightest resemblance to Schnabel's subtle inflection. "And in Schubert *Moment musical* [I had written that Schnabel played these pieces 'with wonderful feeling for their delicacy and subtlety'] he play so:" and Toscanini astonished me again by playing the best-known F-minor with similar gross distentions that hadn't the slightest resemblance to Schnabel's enchantingly simple and graceful treatment of it. Clearly there was a personal antipathy which impelled Toscanini's ear to hear incorrectly the objective facts of Schnabel's performances. And the antipathy was mutual: "He thinks only *he* is pure!" Schnabel once exclaimed to me scornfully. "I know: I traveled with him one night in the train to Milan."

On January 13, 1945, Toscanini conducted the New York Philharmonic in a Pension Fund concert, repeating the program of his first concert with the orchestra on January 14, 1926: Haydn's Symphony No. 101 (*Clock*), Respighi's *Pines of Rome*, Sibelius's *Swan of Tuonela*, *Siegfried's Death and Funeral Music* from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, and Weber's Overture to *Euryanthe*. He had repeated the program also at his final Thursday-Friday pair in April 1936; and it looked as if this was a second and final farewell to the orchestra, which he signalized by writing out the program for facsimile reproduction in the program notes. Far from exhibiting any diminution of his powers, the performances seemed to be the ones of 1926 and 1936 with their wonderful qualities heightened; and this impression was confirmed a few years later when I heard a private

recording of the concert and compared the Haydn *Clock* Symphony with the 1929 performance in Victor M-57: the later one was made even more dazzling by the faster tempo, greater energy and sharper inflection.

And again the bond between Toscanini and the orchestra was demonstrated at the first rehearsal—this time in even more impressive fashion than in 1942. Then he had returned to an orchestra only slightly changed in personnel and not at all disciplined by another conductor; now he returned to an orchestra in which Rodzinski had made a considerable number of replacements and which he had drilled for two years. Nevertheless, having first devoted a few minutes to working out the cross-rhythm at the climax of the Wagner piece and the balance of the wind instruments in the opening chords, Toscanini then simply led the orchestra through it without interruption and produced every sound and contour of the performance of 1936—as though there had been no interval of nine years, no changes in personnel, no other conductor. It was, as in 1942, his way of saying: "This is *my* orchestra."

Nor did I hear any diminution of his powers in the performances of Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz*, Ravel's *La Valse* and the Musorgsky-Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition* at a benefit concert with the NBC Symphony (there was also the Brahms B-flat Concerto with Horowitz, which I didn't hear). But when I visited him shortly afterward he asked how the performances had sounded, and then told me he had been ill and fearful of not getting through the concert, and had conducted *Pictures* with no knowledge and control of what he was doing.

At this visit his mind was full of Haydn's Symphony No. 98, which he had played during his first NBC season and was preparing to play again. The preparation, as usual, consisted in studying the score, listening to the recording of the 1938 broadcast, and reading what he had found in print about the work—Tovey's comments in *Essays in Musical Analysis*. Mentioning Tovey's demonstration of the remarkable similarity between a passage in the slow movement and a passage in the Andante of Mozart's *Jupiter*, Toscanini went on to say, to my amazement, that he considered Haydn greater than Mozart. "I will tell you frankly: sometimes I find Mozart boring. Not G-minor: that is great tragedy; and not concerti; but other music. Is always beautiful—but is always the same." And what he had in mind became clear when he played the record of the 1938 broadcast of Haydn's No. 98: he sat conducting the performance, signaling to me when something was about to happen, smiling his delight when it happened; and it was evident that what delighted him was Haydn's liveliness of mind—the surprises he contrived for his listeners in melody, harmony, rhythm, orchestration. Above all orchestration: it was also evident that as a conductor Toscanini was delighted most by the variety, freshness and ingenuity of Haydn's use of the orchestra—details like the one Toscanini pointed to in the Minuet, exclaiming gleefully: "Flutes and basses!" Nor was it only Haydn who surpassed Mozart in this respect, he said, but also Rossini—as he undertook to show me with the orchestral ingenuity and variety of the Overture to *La Cenerentola*. And here something characteristic happened: putting on the turntable what he

thought was the record with the *Cenerentola* performance, he stood listening with surprise as the scherzo movement of Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* came out of the speaker instead; then, his hands involuntarily beginning to move with the music, he gradually became completely involved with it and conducted it to the end of the record—after which he remembered *La Cenerentola*, found the correct record, and conducted that, pointing out to me the orchestral details that delighted him.

The performance of Haydn's No. 98 that Toscanini broadcast on March 25, 1945, and recorded afterward was, and is, superb considered by itself: only when one compared it with the 1938 performance did one discover that it was less expansive and relaxed, and as a result less effective. Similarly the V-J Day performance of Beethoven's *Eroica*, characteristic and impressive by itself, revealed—when compared with the 1944 and 1939 performances—a shocking lessened energy. And the possibility that Toscanini's powers might be failing was raised by the performances in his regular NBC series the following winter—performances whose extreme rigidity suggested the alarming possibility of a change in his mental processes analogous to the stiffening of the movements of an aging body. I recall in particular a driving, tense first movement of Brahms's Fourth that was in shocking contrast to the slower, relaxed, expansive one three years before; and a Mozart G-minor without the fluidity and energy of the 1939 performance in Victor M-631.

It was not until the fall of 1946 that a lessening of the

rigidity, tenseness and drive and a return of relaxed plasticity began to manifest themselves—most notably and excitingly in the November 3 performance of Mozart's *Divertimento* K.287 for horns and strings. It was on another occasion that Toscanini remarked to me how difficult it was to play Mozart—how boring the music could be unless one knew what to do between the *p* here and the *f* eight measures later; but the comment was relevant to this performance of the *Divertimento*, which not only had the old fluidity and grace, but revealed Toscanini's knowledge of what to do between the *p*'s and *f*'s in the profusion of subtle inflection that delightfully enlivened the *Allegros*, gave exquisite contours to the variation movement, and shaped the *Adagio* as a grandly impassioned vocal declamation with a cumulative expressive force that was breathtaking. And the broadcast also offered a performance of Mozart's *Haffner* Symphony which—in contrast to the expansively plastic 1929 performance in Victor M-65—exhibited a simplification and clarification that made it grand and apotheosized.

I wrote enthusiastically to Toscanini about the *Divertimento* performance; and when, shortly afterward, I went up to the Villa Pauline to visit him, he met me at the door of his study with the pocket score of the *Divertimento* in his hand. "I will tell you why I play this piece," he said. "I listen last summer to *Tanglewood*—" and he shook his head and rolled his eyes heavenward at the memory of what he had heard. Opening the score and pointing to the bass part, he said: "Koussevitzky use *celli* without

bassi; *allóra* sometimes violas play lower than bass part." Also, Koussevitzky's tempo in the variation movement had been too slow for the prescribed Andante and for the character of the music. But most shocking of all had been what happened near the end of the Adagio, where Toscanini showed me in the score the usual indication, which any musician would understand, for the interpolation of a cadenza: the halt on an anticipatory six-four chord, followed by a rest for the interpolated cadenza, and a trill to conclude the cadenza and bring in the orchestra for the rest of the movement. And Toscanini's face now expressed the horror with which he had heard the Boston Symphony pause on the six-four chord, break off for the rest, and—without any cadenza having been interpolated—play the trill and conclude the movement. "This man is no musician!" Toscanini exclaimed. "Is *ignorante*!" He had therefore played the Divertimento correctly for Koussevitzky's instruction: "I think maybe he listen."

Walter Toscanini, who meanwhile had been searching among the 16-inch acetate recordings of the NBC broadcasts, now had what he had been looking for—the recording of the November 3 broadcast of the Divertimento. As he put it on the turntable his father seated me at his desk with the score open before me; and standing behind me and looking over my shoulder he conducted the entire performance as it came out of the speaker. At one point in the first movement where the first violins swept up to a series of high A's he chuckled and exclaimed: "Is difficult!"; and when later in the movement they swept up to an analogous series

of high B-flats he again chuckled and exclaimed: "Is difficult!" *

In the time since the 1944 *Fidelio* Toscanini had broadcast the opening scene of Bellini's *Norma* and the Prologue of Boito's *Mefistofele* in December 1945, and all of Puccini's *La Bohème* in March 1946. And on December 1 and 8 of that year he broadcast Verdi's *La Traviata*. Only a few days before the first half Carl Van Vechten had spoken to me of Toscanini's great period at the Metropolitan: "In those years he would conduct a *Tristan* or *Götterdämmerung* that was overwhelming; but the thing to hear was his performance of early Verdi—of *La Traviata*." And a few days later Toscanini gave millions of radio listeners an idea of what Van Vechten had talked about. These listeners, for whom *La*

* By the time the Divertimento episode got into Howard Taubman's book, *The Maestro*, it had been transformed as follows: "On another occasion he confided that he had made a recording of Mozart's Divertimento for strings and two horns for the benefit of his colleagues, the conductors. . . . In the slow movement he had always felt something lacking and decided what was needed was a cadenza for the first violin. After he had made this addition, Toscanini found a letter from Mozart to his wife which confirmed his hunch." The letter is not to be found in the Mozart correspondence, and a cadenza, by its very nature, is not something of which the need is suspected. And reviewing the book in *The Nation* I pointed out that this incident didn't belong with the stories about Toscanini puzzling over something in a score and reaching a conclusion about it that was confirmed later by documentary evidence; that in this instance, on the contrary, the entire point had been the score's explicit indication of the cadenza by the six-four chord, rest and trill, which Koussevitzky had not heeded, causing Toscanini to pronounce him *ignorante*.

But even worse nonsense was to follow. Collecting material for his book, *Toscanini and the Art of Orchestral Performance*, Robert Charles Marsh picked up Taubman's statement and picked up mine,

Traviata had been a discontinuous series of sections pulled out of shape by the vocal exhibitionism to which the conductor had meekly deferred, now heard phrases in which even the tenor's or soprano's climactic high notes were part of the plastically modeled phrase-contours—heard whole acts which by such continuity of pace and sonority from phrase to phrase and section to section were made into coherent entities. In 1935 W. J. Turner, attempting to convey the superiority of a Toscanini performance to those of other conductors, used the analogy of a poem of Keats printed clearly on good paper as against the same poem printed in smudged ink on blotting paper, or a first-class photograph made by an expert with the finest materials as against a poor one made with a mediocre camera by a not highly capable person. "The musical impression made by Toscanini when he conducts a work," said Turner, "is incredibly clearer in detail, better proportioned as to parts, and more vivid as a whole, than those made by any other con-

apparently with no recognition that mine was a demonstration of the inaccuracy of Taubman's, for he combined the two, omitting Taubman's incorrect statement and attributing to him instead the very statement of mine that corrected his error: "In his book, *The Maestro*, Howard Taubman tells us that Toscanini made this recording for other conductors as a demonstration of how Mozart should be played. Among other things it demonstrated [still, apparently, according to Taubman] that in the slow movement Mozart had clearly indicated a cadenza for the first violin by writing a six four chord, a rest, and a trill leading back into the melodic line. Haggin reports that when Toscanini heard the Koussevitzky performance, in which the chord, the rest, and the trill were played through exactly as marked, he exclaimed, 'This man is no musician. He is ignorant!'"

Such was the writing about Toscanini.

ductor." This was the impression produced by the 1946 *Traviata*; and with its accuracy, clarity and order it had the effect of revelation: one heard the work as one had never heard it before.

I suspected at the time that this performance was slightly different from those Van Vechten heard at the Metropolitan—that in the opera house the performance, although essentially the same in style, had proceeded a little more slowly and with more rhetorical expansiveness, and that in the concert hall, after many years in which Toscanini had been concerned mostly with symphonic music, it was a little swifter and closer-knit. The style of the NBC performance, in other words, was essentially the same, but refined, clarified, and—like that of the November Mozart *Haffner* Symphony—even apotheosized. As for its effect, there were moments which I thought would have gained by the earlier expansiveness, but others which unquestionably gained by the new urgency—notably the first act and the later scene of Flora's party, whose febrile character was excitingly effective and right.

The first act also was tense; and this must have increased the nervousness of Licia Albanese that resulted in her unsteadiness and inaccuracy in "*Sempre libera*," as against her beautiful singing in the subsequent acts. As for that tension, it should have taught Toscanini something he hadn't known ten years before. When he left the New York Philharmonic, Dusolina Giannini told me he had said he was tired of the routine of four or five rehearsals and three or four concerts week after week—especially the three or four performances of one program; and one attraction of the NBC

offer had been that it called for only one performance each week. But the repetitions of the one program with the Philharmonic had had an important value: a conductor and an orchestra may achieve a performance completely at rehearsal; but the first time in public there is likely to be unsettling tension; and relaxed security may come only at the second or third performance. I recall, for example, that when Toscanini conducted the Philharmonic in Beethoven's Ninth in 1936 the performance was tense, driven and harsh-sounding on Thursday and again on Friday, but amazingly relaxed, spacious and beautiful-sounding on Sunday. At NBC there was only the first public performance, in an atmosphere of tension that sometimes made this performance less good than the one at the final rehearsal where conductor and orchestra were at ease; and it was in fact at these rehearsals that one heard some of the greatest of Toscanini's performances. The first act of an opera, then, was likely to suffer from this tension; and the first act of *La Traviata* did.

Thus there were defects in the *Traviata* performance, but not the ones alleged by some critics—not, specifically, the “tempos . . . both fast and rigid” which “thwart [the singers'] efforts.” There were fast tempos which were suitable, like the ones in the febrile first act; but there were also tempos—even in the first act—which were suitably slow and plastic; and the beautiful-sounding, plastically and expressively phrased singing of Peerce and Albanese was not that of singers who were being thwarted. Neither, for that matter, was the coarse-sounding singing of Merrill.

As a matter of fact the critics I have just referred to, who specialize in opera, object to all the Verdi performances—the *Otello*, *Aïda*, *Falstaff* and *Un Ballo in Maschera* as well as the *Traviata*—that Toscanini broadcast and Victor subsequently issued on records. And I may as well deal with their objections at this point.

The performances they approve of are the usual ones in opera houses, in which the singers are allowed to show off their voices at any cost to shape of phrase and continuity of flow; the performances they disapprove of are the ones in which the singers are held by Toscanini to tempo and shape of phrase. They don't of course express their approval and disapproval in those terms: the self-indulgent singing they call "expressive"; the tempos and style that permit it they call "idiomatic"; and in the Toscanini performance presumably unidiomatic tempos "both fast and rigid" "thwart" the singers' attempts to sing expressively and compel them to sing inexpressively. Virgil Thomson made up in his head a Toscanini who was an opera conductor until the age of fifty, when he had to deal with the symphonic repertory without knowledge of its traditions, and solved the problem by "streamlining" the music; from the opera specialists I have referred to one would get the idea of Toscanini as a symphonic conductor who in his old age, lacking knowledge of what is idiomatic in the performance of Verdi, streamlined *this* music. Nor is it only with excessively fast and rigid tempos that he is alleged to have made it impossible for singers to do more than produce the notes without expressiveness: he is accused also of having preferred inexperienced or undistinguished singers who were

willing to submit to his tyranny; and to his accusers' ears the performances betray not only the singers' lack of experience and distinction but their terror of him.

Actually Toscanini's NBC performances of Verdi were those of a man who conducted his first *Aïda* in the opera house in 1886 and his last *Falstaff* there in 1937, and whose stage performances—as I can testify concerning the Salzburg ones of 1937 and the Milan Scala ones of 1929—were like the NBC performances in their freedom from the singers' "idiomatic" distortions that Verdi fought against all his life. Presumably the critics who disapprove of the NBC performances would not have liked the similar *Traviatas* and *Trovatores* that Van Vechten heard at the Metropolitan and treasured in his memory; but they could hardly have attributed those performances to ignorance of either the correct style for Verdi or the traditional distortion of that style in the opera house. Toscanini's Metropolitan performances represented his knowledge of what was truly idiomatic and his repudiation of what was falsely "idiomatic"; and what his critics would not have liked in them represented in addition the personal style of performance (what Virgil Thomson called "streamlining") that he brought to all music—to opera at eighteen, to symphonic music at twenty-eight—a style whose outstanding characteristic in opera as in symphonic music was a coherent plasticity that tended in later years toward greater simplicity, economy, subtlety. His beat, then, was never anything but flexible in relation to the music; in relation to the singer it was unyielding only in compelling her to operate within the beautifully plastic flow it created in the music. And this didn't prevent Destinn

or Hempel or Fremstad from singing expressively and beautifully.

Nor did it prevent the singers in his NBC performances from doing so: the mediocre, inexpressive singing of inexperienced, intimidated singers who are driven breathless by excessively fast tempos, which the critics have reported hearing, was—and is, on the Victor records—not there to be heard. Some of the singing is poor; but most of it is good, and some of it is superb. Moreover the majority of the principals are Metropolitan stars; and it is two of these, Albanese and Merrill, who do the poor singing in the *Traviata*, and another, Richard Tucker, whose voice is cold and lusterless in the *Aïda*; whereas it is two of the comparatively unknown singers, Herva Nelli and Giuseppe Valdengo—the chief targets of the critics I have mentioned—who, far from being mediocre and intimidated, contribute some of the performances' most beautiful and expressive singing. Nelli, in the third act of *Aïda*, does sound frightened for a moment in the phrase near the end of "*O patria mia*" that rises to high C; but even a greater singer would be frightened by having to sing the difficult phrase all in one breath, as Nelli had to do. And later in the act Nelli and Tucker *are* driven breathless by the excessively fast tempo of the concluding section of their duet; but this is an exceedingly rare exception to the rightness of pacing, fast and slow, that is one of the things in the performances which produce the effect of revelation.

On February 9 and 16 Toscanini gave the radio public its first hearing of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* in its entirety,

together with a scene from *The Damnation of Faust*. And somewhere between the *Traviata* and the *Romeo* I was at Toscanini's home, where I listened with him to the test pressings of what I think was the recording of Mozart's *Jupiter* Symphony. For some reason Toscanini was worried about the recorded sound; and in the end I took the records home with me to hear what they sounded like on my phonograph. Within a day, before I could report back, I had a telephone call from Walter, whom I heard repeating to his father my statement that the sound was good. Then Toscanini himself got on the phone to ask me; and I repeated to him that the sound was good. He seemed still unsatisfied; so I asked him if he would like to hear for himself. Yes, he would; and so a day or two later he arrived at my apartment with Walter, who was loaded down with a stack of records.

I first played the older recording of the *Tristan* finale to establish the sound from my equipment, which Toscanini pronounced a little deficient in bass but otherwise good. He kept moving about restlessly, and Walter suggested: "Relax; sit down"; so he sat down, but didn't relax, and soon was on his feet again. I then played the test pressings that had worried him; and he seemed now to be satisfied with their sound. Then Walter began to put on the additional test pressings he had brought along, of which I remember only the ones of Weber's Overture to *Der Freischütz*. After the first side of this recording, as the second side began to be heard, Toscanini, who at that moment was seated at the piano, cried out: "Is wrong record! Is not same tempo as first record!"; whereupon Walter replaced it with another,

and his father, when he heard the first measures, exclaimed: "Now is right tempo!"

Later, still seated at the piano, he pointed to the score of Berlioz's *Romeo* on the music rack and said: "*Love Scene* is most beautiful music in the world."

Romeo was followed by Schubert's C-major; and I remember the rehearsal in which the solo horn, Arthur Berv, played his opening statement with the slight emphasis on the first note of each measure that the score prescribes, but Toscanini compelled him to put the heavier and cruder accents on the notes that can be heard in the recording of the performance, M-1167 and LM-1040. It is interesting that in the 1953 performance on LM-1835 Berv plays his opening statement with only the prescribed slight emphasis once more. And the two recordings enable one to hear also that the 1947 performance still retained features of the 1941 performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra—notably the coda of the first movement—but already had some of the changed features of the 1953 performance—notably the coda of the finale.

Another important event of the 1946-47 series was the performance of Beethoven's Overture *For the Consecration of the House* on March 16, which gave most radio listeners their first hearing of this strange and wonderful piece. And most concert-goers too: my own attendance at concerts in New York began somewhere around 1914; but this was the first public performance of the piece for me. Previously I had known it only from Weingartner's recorded performance; and I could appreciate how fortunate radio listeners

were in becoming acquainted with it through Toscanini's performance, with its tempos that were so skillfully chosen, as Weingartner's were not, to be right for each section and to connect the sections in a coherent progression.

Since Toscanini was criticized for persisting in playing those little pieces by Martucci and other minor Italians, let me point out that he also persisted in playing parts and the whole of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* when nobody else did; that he did the same with *Harold in Italy*; that he gave my generation of concert-goers its first experiences of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*; and that he now did the same with the *Consecration of the House Overture*. He did play some worthless music, but no more, I am sure, than other conductors did. The difference was that he played worthless music mostly by Italians, whereas the others played worthless music by Germans, Russians and Americans; and I don't agree that this constitutes the difference between bad and good program-making.

He was criticized also for not fulfilling his obligation to living composers; but it should be remembered that he began his almost-thirty-year career as a symphonic conductor in this country at the age of sixty, and that as a young conductor in Italy he did conduct what was new and modern. In opera he conducted the first performances at La Scala of Strauss's *Salome* in 1906 and Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in 1908; and in the season of 1925-26 he prepared a stage production of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* there which illness prevented him from conducting. And as one of the most active symphonic conductors in Italy he played Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel* in 1902, *Death and Transfiguration* in

1905, and *Don Juan* in 1906, Debussy's *Faun* piece in 1905, *Nuages* in 1906, *La Mer* in 1912, and *Ibéria* in 1918, Stravinsky's *Petrushka* in 1916, Dukas's *Sorcerer's Apprentice* in 1904, Glazunov's Symphony No. 6 in 1904, Sibelius's *En Saga* in 1905. Even at the Metropolitan he conducted Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleu*. At sixty he may have felt the obligation to living composers was one for younger conductors; and since there were others capable and willing to assume the obligation, it wasn't a bad division of labor to have Stokowski, Koussevitzky, Rodzinski and Mitropoulos handling contemporary works and Toscanini restricting himself to standard repertory. Even so Toscanini did play Shostakovitch's First and Seventh Symphonies, Khabalevsky's Second Symphony and his *Colas Breugnon* Overture. And at the age of seventy-one, astonishingly, he played Barber's *Essay for Orchestra* and *Adagio for Strings*, at seventy-three Roy Harris's Symphony No. 3, at seventy-five Copland's *El Salón México*, and during a couple of years thereafter pieces by Creston, Gould, Gershwin, Gilbert, Kennan, Griffes, William Schuman and Siegmeyer.

On the day in April 1947 that I was to visit Toscanini I happened to see someone from Victor who mentioned a few bits of information and gossip. One piece of information was that Toscanini was dissatisfied with the sound of the timpani on a couple of sides of the recording of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*; another was that Victor had induced him to record the Mozart *Haffner* with a reduced orchestra in NBC's Studio 3A, which was smaller

than 8H. As for gossip, there had been an NBC Symphony rehearsal of Strauss's *Death and Transfiguration* at which Toscanini had let the orchestra go on playing to the end of the introduction before he exploded in anger at its inaccuracy; and the engineers had recorded this episode and more of the rehearsal, including further explosions. On a later occasion the recording had been played for Toscanini, who had exclaimed: "That's me!" and covered his face with his hands.

As I waited downstairs that afternoon while the maid went up to announce me I could hear the piano being played. The playing stopped; and a few moments later I heard my name called by Toscanini. I looked up and saw him at the top of the stairs, smiling down at me. "Come up," he said; and when I did he led me to his study and sat down again at the piano. In February he had broadcast a scene from Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*; and it was this opera that he had been playing on the piano now. "I would like to play this next year: is so beautiful! I hear it played by Y—: was terrible!—such tempi!"—and he gave examples at the piano. "But what tenor? Is extremely difficult, tenor part." Turning a few pages of the score, he pointed to a long-sustained high B-flat (I think) and said: "Is very difficult to sing this note. I hear it once in falsetto"; and he proceeded to sing the aria in his croaking singing voice, accompanying himself with piano chords that were sloppily broken between the two hands. "Is so beautiful! And *Romanza* of Marguerite," which he also sang and played. "But what soprano or mezzo-soprano? I think maybe T'ourel, because is very important to have somebody who can sing

words properly. But is five years since she sing with me in *Romeo and Juliet*, and I do not know how she sing now." I suggested finding out; and I also suggested Ramon Vinay for the tenor part.

Then, "I want to play for you record of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, because in this place"—and he played a passage on the piano—"timpani are too weak, and I want to put in more timpani"—by which he meant that he wanted Victor to dub a new side from the old one and at the same time dub in additional live timpani sound. He then played the test pressing of the Tchaikovsky *Romeo* for me, putting on each record himself clumsily while I watched apprehensively, and once putting on a wrong record with the Khabalevsky *Colas Breugnon* Overture. Seated this time, he conducted the performance as always, giving entrances, anticipating points, smiling his pleasure at what he heard, exclaiming once: "Is good, crescendo of *violini*, no?" And he pointed out the unsatisfactory timpani sound: "Only *celli* and *bassi* are clear." "But I hear the timpani," I said. "Yes, but is weak." I pointed out that if the two sides were dubbed to put in additional timpani sound there would be a loss of some of the beauty of all the other sound, as there had been from the similar dubbing of one side of Haydn's No. 98—which he didn't remember. As I spoke he nodded his understanding, but not, it turned out, his agreement; for when I finished he said: "But I cannot let people say I do not know right sound of timpani."

There being nothing more to say about this, he remembered the recording of the Mozart *Haffner*, which he hadn't listened to yet. "First movement and finale of old *Haffner*

are good," he said, "but not Andante and Minuetto: tempi are too slow." Then he played the new first movement, but stopped the Andante after a few moments: "Is wrong take. There is another take with right tempo." Finding the other, he was pleased by it, and by the rest of the recording. "When Bruno Walter conduct *Haffner* at La Scala I do not understand slow tempo of Minuetto. I ask Casals: 'Is correct, Minuetto so slow?'" And I gathered that Casals had fortified him in his conviction that his own faster tempo was right.

"Can you hear is small orchestra?" he asked. "No," I answered, "but I can hear it is a small studio." At which he told me how difficult it had been to play in that studio, which he didn't like and wouldn't record in again. (Actually he did record the Haydn *Clock* Symphony there too. According to my Victor informant, RCA [of which Victor and NBC were subsidiary companies] had insisted on Victor using NBC's Studio 3A for certain reasons; and the result was two of the most atrocious Toscanini recordings ever issued—with harsh sound and an acoustic deadness that struck the ear a blow after a loud chord. And later the LP dubbings were made unlistenable by Victor's "enhancement.")

Next he played the test pressing of the Schumann *Manfred* Overture. "You like *Manfred* Overture?" he asked. "Very much," I answered. "Is beautiful music!" he exclaimed. "But Downes say is not good music! Ah, *Dio santo!*" And he played on the piano a passage from a Beethoven sonata that Downes had said Schumann borrowed. I no longer recall the passage, but remember saying,

as Toscanini nodded agreement, that Schumann might be echoing something but certainly made it his own.

With this, Toscanini stopped playing records, which he said tired him. Looking about him in search of something, he exclaimed "Ah!" and picked up from his desk the pocket score of Mozart's *Divertimento*. I had asked him in a letter whether he would transfer his markings into another copy of the score for me (my score of Berlioz's *Romeo* has Toscanini's markings for the placing and removal of the strings' mutes in the *Love Scene*); and he now said: "Here is score of *Divertimento*. I do not have *cadenza*; I will find it at NBC. Is here *cadenza*"—as he pointed to the faint traces of some musical notation that had been written in the score and then erased—"but I make different one which must be at NBC. I will find it and send it to you." I explained that I had wanted him to transfer his markings from this copy to another. "No, you take this one."

Then we sat down to talk; and he asked: "You work hard this year?"—referring to the fact that I had begun that year a weekly column on radio music for the *Sunday Herald Tribune*. "Yes," I answered. "There have been two articles to write each week instead of one; and I write very slowly." He nodded as I spoke, and said: "Is better so. Is better to make slow and *good*, as to make fast and not good."

Walter Toscanini arrived; and his father told him that we had listened to the Tchaikovsky *Romeo*, and that the timpani must be reinforced. Again I pointed out the loss in the other sound from dubbing; and he answered: "You have better ear; I will not hear it." I repudiated this amazing statement; whereupon it turned out that he had meant my

ear for recorded sound; but I insisted that he would hear the loss, and suggested that he play the finale of the Haydn No. 98, in which he would hear the loss in the first side as against the second. But it was still impossible for him to let the *Romeo* go out with the timpani not right. So we agreed that the thing to do was to make the dubbings and let him decide then whether he preferred the dubbed sides or the originals.

There were questions and comments about performances he had heard. "Did you hear broadcast of Santa Monica Orchestra with Rachmilovich? I do not know anything about this conductor; but I listen—I hear—strings—whole orchestra—is good. I am glad to hear young conductor who play good." And to Walter: "You must tell Chotzie * to bring him to NBC for summer concerts." On the other hand another conductor, who had been highly recommended to him, "make terrible tempi." And Z—, who formerly "was cold, but conduct correct [illustrated by precise conducting gestures], now stop beating time [illustrated], then make big movement [again illustrated]. And tempi in *Ibéria*! [Toscanini put his hand to his head in pain.] He play second movement so slow that this *passage* [the chromatically descending and ascending passage soon after the beginning] is so [illustrated at the piano]. *Dio santo!*" Then something reminded him of Sibelius's Seventh Symphony: "I listen with score. Sometime you must show me where is music. I cannot hear any music in this piece."

* Samuel Chotzinoff.

Had he, I asked, heard the De Sabata recording of Mozart's *Requiem*, which I thought was so remarkable. He nodded as I spoke, and answered: "Is good performance. De Sabata is good but sometimes nervous conductor." (But on another occasion he used a term of disapproval instead of "nervous" for De Sabata's violent gesticulation. Mentioning that he had been accused of not doing enough for young conductors, he said: "I always invite young conductors to come to my rehearsals. De Sabata come to my rehearsals—but then on podium is Pagliaccio!")

"Did you hear A—?" he asked. "Only a little of the *Coriolan* Overture and *Daphnis and Chloë*, which I didn't like," I said. "Did you hear Berlioz *Fantastique*?"—referring to the performance with which A— had created a sensation. "No." "I hear only part of last movement on record," said Toscanini. "Is in double tempo. Is easy to make exciting in double tempo. But is so fast, *tromboni* cannot play correct this *passage* [he played it on the piano]; also violas here [he played the passage on the piano]." Walter had found the record, an acetate made in Carnegie Hall during the performance; and when he played it Toscanini pointed to the inaccurate playing of the trombones and violas. "Is easy to make exciting in double tempo," he repeated at the end, "but not easy to play correct." And I believe it was on this occasion that he said of the work itself: "I never like *Fantastique*: is for me not good music. Only last two movements are good music. Once, in Lago Maggiore, at night, I hear on radio *Fantastique*—I do not know who conduct—is so beautiful I think maybe is good

music. I look in score: is not good music. I never know who is conductor of this performance!"

Toscanini's mind reverted to Berlioz's *Damnation of Faust*; and we all discussed my suggestion of Vinay. Toscanini now remembered the matter of time. He added up the time required by the scenes that would make up the first broadcast and found that they would fit into the available hour; but the second part turned out to be too long; and Toscanini speculated whether the program following the NBC Symphony would give up a quarter of an hour this one time. He began to figure out the time again, while Walter remarked to me: "What my father does not understand is that there must be a decision *now*, because singers must be engaged before they get involved with other activities." Tourel was mentioned again, and Toscanini repeated: "I must have somebody who can sing words. Is not enough, beautiful voice: must be expression. No singer understand that."

The subject of singers with nothing but voices, and their musical excesses in the display of those voices, reminded him of a De Lucia record which he asked Walter to play. While he was getting it his father played on the piano some of the phrases as De Lucia distorted them; and when the record was played Toscanini sat laughing at them. But Caruso's name caused him to hold his head in his hands: "He sing with me at La Scala in '99, and I write to Boito: 'You must come to La Scala to hear *Elisir d'Amore* with young tenor who sing like angel.' But in 1901 is already change; and in New York—! I tell him: 'Yes, you make much money—but no! *no!* NO!!' "

It was now late in the afternoon, and Toscanini left us for a few minutes. When he returned he had changed from his maroon smoking jacket to his usual black suit. He was driving down to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Horowitz, his son-in-law and daughter, and offered me a lift. While we waited for the car he showed Walter a book—with a long inscription by him—that he was taking to little Sonia Horowitz. "Is very good," he said to Walter, his face expressing his delight over it.

In the car I asked him about Schuch, a former director of the Dresden Opera, whom someone had mentioned to me; and his face lighted up: "Oh yes! Is *good*! Is *good* opera conductor! He came to La Scala—is good conductor of Italian opera. I also hear him in Dresden—I hear *Oberon*—I remember overture is very beautiful, and I am *sure* is change in strings. When Busch come to La Scala I say: 'Look in score of *Oberon* and tell me if is change in strings.'

What about Nikisch? "Is good conductor—but make performance for public [he made gestures of acting]. And sometimes he do not look at score." Then with increasing intensity: "When I conduct I am always prepared. I do not stand before public to show I am Toscanini—never! Always I try to do my best. And always conducting is great suffering for me. At home, with score, when I play piano, is great happiness. But with orchestra is great suffering—*sempre*, *sempre*! * Even when I listen to record I am afraid horn will not play correct, clarinet will make mistake—*sempre*, *sempre*! Last week they play for me record of rehearsal

* always

of *Tod und Verklärung*. I do not know why they make this record. All my life I have bad temper: is impossible for me to understand why orchestra cannot play correct. But when I hear this record I am ashamed."

Later he asked again about my work; and as I described how I had made things harder for myself by undertaking to give a lecture which I had given before, but which I had now found had to be changed, Toscanini nodded and smiled his understanding. He asked how long I had been writing for the *Herald Tribune*; and I said since the preceding October. "I read some interesting things in these articles," he said. "Do you also read the *Nation* articles?" I asked. "Oh yes! . . . People write to you?" "Yes," I said, "from all over the country; and it's a great pleasure—especially the letters from young people, sometimes very extraordinary young people, and from small places." His face had been expressing his own pleasure at this; and he said: "You write about this man . . . [he groped for the name] is professor . . . in university . . . here"—and he pointed northward from Ninety-fifth Street where we were at the moment. "Columbia?" I suggested. "Columbia, sì?" "Lang?" "Lang, sì." He was referring to a *Nation* article in which I had, among other things, quoted from a letter in which a reader cited the factual record of the number of performances and number of seasons, against Lang's statement in his *Music in Western Civilization* that Auber's opera *La Muette de Portici* was forgotten shortly after its initial success. "In that article," I said to Toscanini, "the letter I quoted was from one of those young people—from Greensboro, North Carolina." He nodded; then, pursuing his

own thought, he said: "The musicologists—they know everything—" "Except music," we concluded in unison.

I visited Toscanini again in mid-October 1947; and on the way upstairs to his study I heard him playing over and over again the little ascending scale of the woodwinds at the beginning of Beethoven's *Consecration of the House* Overture. It turned out that he was going to broadcast the piece again on the twenty-fifth, and was preparing as usual by going over the score and listening to the recording of the performance of the preceding March. He showed me in the score the places that were creating problems and difficulties—the bassoon part in one tutti, for example, about which he said, shaking his head dejectedly: "I try everything, but I am afraid I will never hear these bassoons." And then with the score open before us we listened to the recording of the earlier performance.

I remember only one other matter that came up that morning. In July NBC had announced that in October the NBC Symphony broadcasts would be moved from Sunday at five to Saturday at six-thirty; and I had written in the *Herald Tribune* that if NBC was right in contending that a greater number of stations would carry the program at the new time, this was only because the time had little commercial value—which was to say that it was a time when people were at dinner or preparing for dinner or on the way out to dinner, and in any case not able to listen to the radio. In September I had discussed the matter again in the *Herald Tribune*, quoting readers in the Midwest and West who had written me that the broadcasts, if carried

live, would reach those areas at earlier times when some people were at work. Moreover, in mid-October Toscanini had not yet begun his broadcasts, and the orchestra was still playing under its summer conductors. I was therefore amazed, when Toscanini mentioned the matter that morning, to discover he was under the impression that several million more people were listening on Saturday than had listened on Sunday.

I think this was one of the times I was asked to stay for lunch; and I remember the servant attempting, without success, to coax Toscanini to take some veal in addition to the few vegetables that were all he ate.

With the *Consecration of the House* Overture Toscanini, on the twenty-fifth, played Beethoven's Seventh; and I recall the performance of the finale at a rehearsal. His movements at rehearsal were more uninhibitedly vigorous than they were in the presence of an audience at a concert; and the climax of the last crescendo had him stamping his feet—with results that caused one member of the orchestra to exclaim: "I've got to get back into my skin." On the other hand the first measures of Mendelssohn's rarely heard *Tale of Lovely Melusine* Overture were played, at a rehearsal the following week, with an inflection so exquisite as to bring tears to my eyes. And Mendelssohn's pieces for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were played with an exquisite plasticity and grace, and on occasion an elegantly impassioned animation, which I found equally moving.

A Mozart program included the Divertimento K.287

again and the Bassoon Concerto K.191, both of which were recorded. I imagine the concerto was written for some bassoon-player Mozart knew; and I would suspect that Mozart used the occasion to amuse himself—not only obviously with the tootling and braying he gave to the solo instrument, but subtly with the comments he gave to the orchestra—comments which go unnoticed in the usual performance, but which claimed delighted attention with the life they had from Toscanini's inflection.

And a subsequent Handel-Vivaldi-Bach program had one wondering why, if Toscanini played a Handel concerto grosso with a small chamber group, he played a Bach suite with all the NBC strings; why, with this mass of strings, he didn't use a piano that would have been heard instead of a harpsichord that was inaudible; why he played an uninteresting little violin concerto of Vivaldi instead of one of the many lovely works of this composer that he might have played; and why he played the monstrous Respighi transcription of Bach's *Passacaglia* for organ.

The climax of the fall series came on December 1 and 8 with the performance of Verdi's *Otello*. The art which manifests itself in astounding fashion in as early a work as *Macbeth*, in the vocal and orchestral writing of the *Sleep-walking Scene*—this art achieves in *Otello* a sustained incandescent invention that fills in moment after moment with marvelously wrought details of melody, harmony, figuration and orchestration. And this sustained operation of Verdi's powers was given overwhelming effect by the similar sustained operation of the powers that kept the progression unfailingly beautiful in sound, clear in outline

and texture, and continuous in impetus, tension and force. In this performance Toscanini had an all but perfect cast; and so one heard—and still hears on Victor LM-6107—not only the orchestral part superbly played but the vocal parts with the tonal beauty and remarkable expressive inflection and coloring of Valdengo's singing, the loveliness and purity of Nelli's, the fine singing of Vinay at the times—notably in the third act—when he achieved delicacy without disturbing effort, and ringing sonority without a disturbing quaver.

At the rehearsals of the orchestra alone Toscanini filled in the singing—with no vocal beauty but with much expressive force. I still remember his delivery of Iago's "*Non so*" * in reply to Otello's question what had happened, after the drunken brawl in the first act. And I remember also his stopping the orchestra in the third-act duet of Otello and Desdemona to say: "You must understand this situation: these are her first tears."

Before I visited Toscanini early in February 1948 I asked to hear some of the recording of the broadcast of Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* a year earlier. But when I arrived Toscanini had an acetate recording of A——'s entire performance of the Berlioz *Fantastique* with which to demonstrate to me that other parts were as bad as the finale. "I pay for recording, to have proof!" he exclaimed—proof that the march movement, which he proceeded to play for me, also was whipped up in tempo in a way that was exciting but that

* "I don't know."

converted the *March to the Scaffold* into a march of triumph—something he regarded as not just a musical but a moral transgression.

With this demonstrated, Toscanini sat down with me at the piano with the score of *Romeo* open before us, to listen to the recording of the broadcast. I listened and read; he conducted, gave entrance cues, sang, and occasionally pointed to something in the score, exclaiming: "This is *honest* performance: you can read it in score!"

Later, as he was putting away the score, he looked at me with a smile and said: "Now, Haggin, what would you like?"

"Anything you would like to hear," I answered.

"No"—still smiling—"what would you like—what would you like to have?" And as I stared at him uncomprehendingly he added: "You come only to see me?"

"Yes, of course," I managed to answer, so shocked that I didn't until later apprehend what he was telling me in this way; but then I did see what a revealing incident this was. My meetings with Toscanini were few and infrequent and limited in scope; and I didn't get to know him as his intimates did; but I did get to know him as *I* did—meaning that I think I learned some things about him which I feel sure of, no matter how they may appear to someone else. Those who have read the description of Toscanini's behavior in the Chotzinoff book may find it hard to accept the idea of his essential innocence; but I am thinking of a child's innocence which is sometimes retained up to the point where the young person comes face to face with some of the brutal and evil realities of adult existence and resorts

to defenses and counterattacks that may be unpleasant. I got an impression of such innocence in Toscanini; and I find it understandable that coming face to face with a world of hard-eyed people who all wanted something from him—for whom he was in one way or another an object of exploitation—he occasionally dealt with them in the ways described by Chotzinoff. Even with friends? Even with friends: apparently he sensed what sort of friends some of them were. And to me it is significant that Chotzinoff in his book describes Toscanini as unfailingly courteous and considerate to servants.

After the playing of the Berlioz *Romeo* recording and the incident I have just described there was the usual chatting about what we had heard. Ansermet had been conducting the NBC Symphony for the first time; and Toscanini pronounced him "best conductor of NBC"—which I took to mean the best of the guest conductors the orchestra had had. "Is good musician. When he play *La Valse* is different from my *La Valse*, and Chotzinoff say is not good. But I say: 'No. Is not like my *La Valse*—but is good.'" As for the music Ansermet had played, Stravinsky's *Symphonies pour instruments à vent* had impressed him as the work of a mathematician (it may have been on this occasion that he said he had stopped playing Stravinsky because "he call Beethoven fake"—clearly a misconception of whatever Stravinsky had said). Nor had he cared for Debussy's *Jeux*. Ansermet had also played Debussy's *Gigues*; and this visit may have been one of the several times when I asked Toscanini whether he had ever played *Gigues* and *Rondes*

de printemps, the companion pieces of *Ibéria*, and each time, nodding and smiling reminiscently, he answered: "Ye-e-es, Debussy send me score," and nothing more. Late in March *Rondes de printemps* was announced for a Debussy program, but didn't materialize.

Since he was to play Tchaikovsky's *Manfred* in a few weeks this work was in his mind, and he told me why he liked it best of Tchaikovsky's music. "Is not one note banal. Not like Fifth—Fifth is banal: second movement—ah-h-h, *Dio santo!*" He mentioned that he was going to play Beethoven's Ninth at his last broadcast. And the opera next year would be Verdi's *Falstaff*.

At some point I asked him his opinion of Frieda Hempel, whose recordings had given me an impression of her as the greatest singer of her time. "Was good Eva in *Meistersinger*," he said; and he remembered also her Page in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, her singing in Beethoven's Ninth. The soloists in this performance of the Ninth at the Metropolitan—Hempel, Homer, Karl Jörn, Putnam Griswold—were "best I ever have; and was good orchestra." This reminded him of the rehearsal at which the Metropolitan orchestra "play like pig" and he swore at it in Italian. When, subsequently, the Italian was translated, the orchestra was offended and said it wouldn't play for him until he apologized. To the mediator who came to see him Toscanini explained that he couldn't apologize because "orchestra play like pig." But he proposed the solution that worked: "I go to rehearsal and smile and say '*Good morning.*'"

I had been asked to stay for lunch; and when Toscanini

and I seated ourselves at the table Walter Toscanini wasn't there. "Is good," Toscanini commented, "but not punctual. Only once was punctual: I was married June 21; he was born March 21."

Of the further talk at lunch I remember only a few fragments. At one point Toscanini spoke of Puccini as not having been "sincere" in relation to the words as Verdi had been—except in the finale of *La Bohème*. At another point the name of Cleofonte Campanini came up; and Toscanini spoke highly of his ability as a conductor: "Had taste in Italian opera, but could not read score. First rehearsal is good; but he make more rehearsal and make worse," and he chuckled. Koussevitzky's name also came up: Toscanini thought he should have stopped conducting, and suspected that "he conduct because I conduct. I will conduct until I am ninety!"—this with an emphatic jab of his arm toward the floor. And Koussevitzky's actions as a world figure elicited from Toscanini the comment "I am not great man! Is enough to be a man!"

He was driving down to NBC for a rehearsal of the soloists for the Ninth Symphony; and I drove with him part of the way. I remember only mentioning something done by his extraordinary first cellist, Frank Miller, and Toscanini's face lighting up as he agreed that Miller was a fine musician—and, he added, his first viola, Carlton Cooley, too.

On March 6 Toscanini broadcast the only performance of Mozart's Symphony K.543 in E flat that he ever gave with an American orchestra. It was a performance, on the

one hand, filled with the exquisite inflection he so well understood how to put in between the *p*'s and *f*'s; but a performance, on the other hand, sacrificed to a cause—the cause of the true Andante. The common error of taking Andante to mean slow, and of playing a Mozart Andante, in effect, as an Adagio, had become an obsession with Toscanini; and instead of playing the Andante movement of the E-flat Symphony as a true Andante in terms of its substance, he made the performance a demonstration of a true Andante in terms of the 2/4 time signature—with results that can be heard on Victor LM 2001, which reproduces the performance that was broadcast: the Andante in terms of the two beats in each measure was much too fast for the proper flow and articulation of the substance. The obsession about even slow tempos being too slow caused him also to play the Adagio introduction of the first movement a little too fast for the music to have the majesty it should have. And the obsession about everything being too slow produced an Allegretto tempo in the Minuet that was too fast for the music to have its proper grace.

On March 20 the owners of television sets wherever the NBC telecast was carried by local stations were able not only to hear but to see Toscanini and the NBC Symphony perform a Wagner program. Like the OWI film of performances of Verdi's Overture to *La Forza del Destino* and *Hymn of the Nations*, the telecast followed the usual film practice of shifting back and forth between conductor and players. The moments in which one saw Toscanini at close range as his first-desk string-players saw him, and

not only observed but felt the intensity of his involvement, were moving and exciting; and some of the goings-on in the orchestra were interesting. But because Toscanini was not kept uninterruptedly in view, the listening spectator did not witness what was so fascinating in the Toscanini operation—the related continuities of his activity and the performance it produced.

The continuity in the performance I have referred to many times: it was, first, one of impetus and tension, which caused the progression of sound, once started, to keep going with unfailing momentum and cohesive tension from one sound to the next; it was, in addition, one of shape, produced by changes of sonority and pace that were always in right proportion to what preceded and followed, so that the timing and force of one sound strongly implied the timing and force of the next, giving the flow naturalness and inevitability in addition to its coherence. This continuous flow of the performance was produced by a continuous activity—a continuous exercise by Toscanini of the utmost attentiveness, concentration and control. Once he started the progression going, he marshaled it along, watched over it, controlled it to make it come out as planned. The marshaling was done with those large, plastic, sensitive movements of his right arm (extended to the point of his baton), which delineated for the orchestra the flow of sound in much of its subtly inflected detail and literally conducted the orchestra from one sound to the next in that flow—the effectiveness of these movements being due to their extraordinary explicitness in conveying his wish at every moment, and to the compelling personal force they transmitted. The

left hand meanwhile was in constant activity as the instrument of the apprehensive watchfulness that showed itself on Toscanini's face—now exhorting, now quieting, now warning, now suppressing.

The moment-to-moment relation of the continuities of activity and performance was, I have said, fascinating to watch. And moving in addition was the absorbed, unself-conscious operation of extraordinary powers that gave Toscanini's conducting the appearance of a natural act like a bird's flight, in which the powers operated with complete adequacy for each momentary situation but with no more than adequacy—an economy that was a form of honesty in relation to the material and situation and gave the operation a moral quality.

In this first telecast some of the shifts from Toscanini to the orchestra were well chosen and timed; but sometimes the camera reached the player late, or even too late; it also did some aimless wandering about, and some picking out of players who weren't doing anything that called for this attention; and it failed sometimes to pick out a player who was doing something of great importance.

The April 3 telecast of Beethoven's Ninth was in all respects better. There were longer images of Toscanini's conducting; some of the shifts from him to the orchestra or chorus or soloist were made by a slow dissolve which carried his movements into the playing or singing they were related to, so that the playing or singing became a continuation of his activity; and in some instances the image of Toscanini conducting was kept superimposed on the image of the players or singers. There was less aimless wandering of the

camera, and better marksmanship wherever it was aimed. Nevertheless the horn solo in the Trio of the Scherzo was missed both times, and this after the kettledrum joke in the *Ritmo di tre battute* section of the Scherzo had also been missed both times; and I was fuming about all this during the return of the Scherzo, when suddenly there was Toscanini signaling the drummer for the first *forte* statement of the three-note figure, then the drummer playing the figure *forte*, and again *forte*, and again *forte*, and then—after an unexpected extra measure—an unexpected *mezzo-forte*.

What remains in my memory is one image: of Toscanini, at the end of the first movement, lowering his arm and at the same time lowering his eyes in momentary relaxation of bodily and mental tension, then raising his eyes which flashed an electrifying signal to the orchestra as he raised his arm for the second movement.

The performance of the Ninth on this occasion was in Toscanini's later, less expansive style, of which it provided one of the finest, most effective examples. Unfortunately he had undistinguished soloists in the finale.

But he was even more unfortunate in the benefit performance of Verdi's *Requiem* in Carnegie Hall on April 26. In the unaccompanied passage for soprano and chorus just before the concluding fugue, Herva Nelli became separated from the chorus in pitch by an ever widening gap. One expected Toscanini to stop and begin the section again; but he went on, providing a striking example of his iron self-discipline in public in the face of mistakes by his musicians or annoyances from the audience, as compared with

his lack of self-control at rehearsals. The commotion at the opening *Fidelio* of the Salzburg Festival in 1937—caused by the presence of the Windsors—was such that I expected him to throw down his baton and walk out; but he went on conducting the performance.

Six of the broadcasts in the fall of 1948 were devoted to a Brahms cycle noteworthy for the fact that the performances of the Haydn Variations and the Third and Fourth Symphonies exhibited once more the repose, the relaxation, the steadiness, and as a result the spaciousness and grandeur they had not had two or three years before. Especially impressive in this way was the concluding passacaglia movement of the Fourth, whose effect—the cumulative force and impact of the series of varied repetitions of the initial eight-measure statement—depends on maintaining the tempo of this initial statement throughout the series of variations, as Brahms directs. This effect is destroyed by the usual practice of changing the tempo in each variation and slowing down enormously in Variations 10 to 15; but Toscanini achieved it in impressive fashion by maintaining the single tempo, with only subtle modifications, throughout the movement.

The relaxation, spaciousness and clarification continued to be evident in the performances of other music in the remaining two broadcasts of the fall series, including one of Strauss's *Don Quixote*. "That," remarked an NBC musician after the final rehearsal of the Strauss piece, "is something we'll never hear the like of again." He was referring to the marvelous clarity of the detail in the complex texture,

the plastic beauty of the form in sound; and actually these were heard again in the performance Toscanini broadcast in November 1953, which was issued by Victor on LM-2026. But my musician was right: I have never heard a performance by another conductor that had this clarity and plastic beauty. However I did hear a performance—by Bruno Walter with the New York Symphony in the twenties—which made me laugh more with its sharper pointing up of the fun in the piece. And listening to a recording of Toscanini's performance in 1938 I was amazed by the greater energy it exhibited right from the opening high-spirited statement of the oboe and flute. This lessened energy showed itself in some other performances of the later years, but not in all.

Toscanini was followed by Ansermet, and Ansermet by Guido Cantelli. Listening to Toscanini in those years, and marveling at his continuing powers, one had realized that some day there would nevertheless be an end, and had wondered if there would ever again be the accidental coming together of the particular musical taste, technical capacities and personal characteristics that had combined to produce this unique way of operating as a conductor and its unique results. And so it was exciting to hear in Cantelli's performances with the NBC Symphony an operation similar to Toscanini's in attitude, method and result. The performances, like Toscanini's, shaped the works strictly on the lines laid out by the composers' directions about tempo and dynamics in the score; the shaped progressions resembled Toscanini's in their purity of taste and style, their continuity

and organic coherence, their clarity of outline, texture and structure. There were of course differences too: as against the power creating a continuous tension in the flow of a Toscanini performance, one heard in Cantelli's performances a youthful lyricism and grace. These qualities of youth the performances exhibited, but not the immaturity about which some critics felt safe in pontificating to show their keen discernment ("That degree of musical culture and experience which can settle, almost instinctively, on proper tempi and sonorous values for such works as the Mozart are not yet his," observed Irving Kolodin out of the implied fullness of his own musical culture and experience, concerning a beautifully paced and phrased performance of Mozart's *Divertimento* K.287): the performances certainly would change in time, but each as it was produced then emerged as a completely, satisfyingly achieved entity.

The performances also resembled Toscanini's in their precision of orchestral execution and sonority, their brilliant virtuosity; and if anyone points out that Cantelli was, after all, conducting a virtuoso orchestra, the answer is that such an orchestra plays in that way only for a virtuoso conductor. One heard in the performances the authority of directing mind and hand that was evident at rehearsals: the authority of the kind of knowledge of everything in the score and everything going on in the orchestra, of one's purpose and the means of achieving this purpose, that commands the respect and response of an orchestra like the NBC Symphony. And Cantelli's musical and technical equipment, his fanatical personal dedication, won this respect and response not only from the conscientious musi-

cians in the orchestra but from the hard-boiled specimens of the genus New York orchestral player.

I believe that in a letter to Toscanini at this time I included the question whether I might attend Cantelli's rehearsals; and when he telephoned he said: "Yes, come to rehearsal. You must hear this young conductor." I had missed the first rehearsal, but got to the second, at which Cantelli worked with the orchestra on Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*. He did so under several handicaps, one of which was the awareness of Toscanini himself listening in the sixth row behind him. But if this contributed to Cantelli's nervousness and tenseness, it also was a help: the demands of a high-strung, fanatically dedicated person, the fact that he was a young man facing the orchestra of the world's most celebrated conductor, his handicap of not knowing a word of English—all these created not only tenseness in Cantelli but tense situations with the orchestra, which Toscanini's presence prevented from developing into anything worse.

Toscanini's presence also provided the orchestra with amusement. At the first rehearsal he had been given the score of *Mathis*, which he soon knew by memory; and thereafter, completely unconscious of what he was doing, he sat conducting the piece—beating time, signaling entrances, and all the rest. And the same thing happened a week later at the rehearsals of Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*.

The program of Toscanini's first broadcast after Cantelli's engagement constituted an additional compliment to the

young conductor: a recognition that this time Toscanini was returning to an orchestra which had been kept at the high pitch of technical performance that enabled him to play Berlioz—and not just the *Roman Carnival Overture* and *Harold in Italy*, which require the utmost precision in execution and balanced sonority, but the terrifyingly difficult *Queen Mab* Scherzo, with its feathery string *pianissimos*, glints of woodwind color, and magical sounds of distant horns. And it occurred to me this time that in addition to the imagination, the ear and the technical powers there was one other characteristic of Toscanini that made him so effective a conductor of Berlioz—one related to an outstanding characteristic of Berlioz himself. Nothing that happens in Berlioz's music is perfunctory: when an instrument enters or an inner voice moves, the activity is something attentively, purposefully, freshly thought—this fresh thinking from point to point being responsible for much of the music's ever-amazing originality. In whatever happens one is aware of Berlioz's mind working; and this activity in the music makes it excitingly alive—as it was especially when conducted by Toscanini, in whose performances too one heard nothing done perfunctorily, everything done with attention and energy by a mind unceasingly active.

The spring series was made notable by a Beethoven *Eroica*—in the simpler, swifter, tauter style—that was hair-raising in its energy and power; and on the other hand by a Schubert *Unfinished* remarkable in the way its steady tempos created an almost superearthly quiet and calm in which both the dramatic force and the serenity of the work

were achieved. And the series ended with a performance of *Aïda*, on March 26 and April 2, whose accuracy, clarity and order caused this much-battered work also to sound as though it were newly created. Not only did it give artistic validity and effect to the surviving formulas of the earlier Verdi style, but it allowed one to hear beautifully realized the exquisite harmonic and orchestral details with which *Aïda* is enriched, and which Verdi's subtilized craftsmanship elaborated into the fluent idiom of *Otello*.

Except for Tucker, whose voice was powerful but cold and lusterless, the cast was excellent, with Nelli and Valdengo again, and a newcomer, Eva Gustavson, who revealed in the second broadcast the luscious contralto voice that nervousness clouded with tremolo in the first. Nervousness also made Nelli's voice weak and breathy in the first broadcast (portions of the rehearsals, in which Nelli and Gustavson were at ease, appear to have been substituted in Victor LM-6132, with passages that were re-recorded in 1954). And an additional reason for the nervousness on this occasion was the fact that the performance was televised. It was, in fact, filmed, and could be shown again.

The *Aïda* performance was still in Toscanini's mind when I visited him in April. In fact, the first thing he did was to give me a photostat of the passage in the letter in which Verdi added the low B-flats at the end of "*Celeste Aïda*" that are heard in the performance in LM-6132. "I do not know why Verdi did not change the published score," said Toscanini. "Is impossible to sing high B-flat *pianissimo*—only in falsetto, which is not correct style in this work."

I spoke enthusiastically about certain exquisite details in *Aïda*; and Toscanini, who was seated at the piano, played not only the ones I mentioned but others—among them the violins at the beginning of the Nile Scene and the alternations of major and minor in the dance in the Temple Scene. Verdi, he said, was a great artist in addition to being the great melodist that Bellini and Donizetti were—and that only the Italians were, not the Germans. This he demonstrated by first pounding out on the piano the endless sequences at the beginning of the *Liebestod* in *Tristan und Isolde*, breaking off with a vehement “*Dio santo!*”, and then playing “*Spirito gentil*” from Donizetti’s *La Favorita*, with his face registering his pleasure.

I said I thought *Aïda* was the most taxing soprano part in the operatic repertory; and he agreed that it was very difficult, especially if the soprano sang the long phrases in “*O patria mia*”—and here he played the one near the end that rises to high C and the concluding phrase that rises to A—in one breath as they are marked, and as Nelli had done.

What about the next opera—what about *Falstaff*? “I would like very much to perform this opera, and I would also like to perform it in little theater in Bussetto in 1952 and to record this performance. But it depend on singers.” He mentioned one baritone he had found unsuitable; another who “could sing—but is lazy.” And once more he said: “In this opera pronunciation of words is most important.”

And *The Damnation of Faust*? “Is no tenor. The high B-flat—though it could be in falsetto, because is the style.”

Cantelli also was very much in Toscanini’s mind. “I love

this young conductor," he said, his face glowing at the thought of Cantelli. "I think is like me when I was young." Nevertheless he had rejected the NBC suggestion to drop Ansermet the following year and give an additional four weeks to Cantelli. "Ansermet is good conductor; and I do not want people to say I bring only Italian conductor."

He thanked me for the copy of W. J. Turner's *Beethoven* I had sent him, and agreed that there were wonderful things in it. I told him about Turner's other writings, including his remarkable pieces about Toscanini's concerts in London. Toscanini said he hadn't met Turner there: "I meet man who write about Wagner"—meaning Ernest Newman. I then told him how, when I had met Turner in London in 1937, he hadn't pretended an interest he didn't feel; how surprised, therefore, I had been in 1943 by a letter from him congratulating me on my writing in *The Nation*; and how pleased and moved I had been to receive this appreciation that was so completely unexpected. "Yes! And so spontaneous!" Toscanini exclaimed, his face lighting up.

I asked him about a statement concerning the appoggiatura that I had found marked by him in Lilli Lehmann's autobiography, which he had lent me. I remember his answering—illustrating at the piano with the opening section of the Overture to *Don Pasquale*—that there had to be variety in the treatment of the appoggiatura, "and this is matter of taste, which conductor must have." And he cited the appoggiaturas in the aria in the second act of Gluck's *Orfeo*, which "Bruno Walter make always the same." The German manner of treating the appoggiatura that he considered wrong was, he said, started by Mahler. "Was crazy

man! Fourth Symphony [which presumably he had heard on the radio a day or two before] is terrible!"

I also asked him about a Sunday article of Olin Downes in the early thirties—a report of a conversation with Toscanini, in which Downes quoted him as saying that Berlioz's orchestration was original but not good—that of a genius but an amateur, compared with Wagner—and that it was nonsense to say Rimsky-Korsakov's editing had spoiled Musorgsky's *Boris*—that on the contrary, without Rimsky we wouldn't have had *Boris*. He didn't recall this conversation and remembered only meeting Downes when he conducted the Scala Orchestra in Boston. "Then he was all right; but later—*Dio santo!* I do not understand this man, who write this much [indicating with his fingers a volume a half-inch thick] about my performance of *Otello*, and then praise Metropolitan *Otello*. . . ." Then, coming back to Musorgsky's *Boris*, he conceded that Rimsky's correction of the consecutive fifths in the Simpleton's song had spoiled the passage, but insisted that the editing as a whole had made the work a success. I cited Rimsky's own statement in *My Musical Life* that the Musorgsky original had been a success when it had first been produced. "Yes," said Toscanini, "but only in Russia."

The Metropolitan *Otello* reminded him of Tamagno and *Otello*. "I ask: 'You sing always so?' He say: 'Yes, I sing always so.' I ask Verdi, and is not true."

"To get Tamagno," he continued, "we must take Calvé in opera called *Messalina*. When she sing this opera for me composer play piano; and I ask him: 'You are satisfied?' He say: 'Yes, I am satisfied.' Calvé tell me when I may

come to hotel for rehearsal; and I tell her we make rehearsal in theater. She leave the same day"; and he chuckled.

It must have been the discussion of *Boris Godunov* that reminded him of Chaliapin. "We ask him, but he will not sing at La Scala. After I am gone he sing there"—this with another chuckle. "He sing in first *Mefistofele*. When I hear him in *Mefistofele* later I would not speak to him. But later I hear him in first *Boris* in Paris, and I go to him and say I must embrace him."

And it may have been on this occasion that he told me the story of his first orchestral concert in Turin, to show that "Toscanini was always Toscanini. I make rehearsal in pit; then I say I must have rehearsal on stage because in concert orchestra will play on stage. Manager say is not necessary; I say I will not conduct concert. This man was like father to me; but when is time for concert I am in bed. Manager come to hotel; but I stay in bed." And so the concert was given only after Toscanini had had his rehearsal on stage.

He remembered that I had written him about a photograph—one of him rehearsing with the Philadelphia Orchestra—which Mason Jones, the great first horn of the orchestra, had asked me to take to Toscanini to be autographed. I had brought it with me and gave it to Toscanini, who examined it closely, compared it with one on the piano, and then said: "*È bella*," which was true. He now addressed himself to what turned out to be the formidable operation of autographing it—which is to say that first he had to find the bottle of white ink, then the pen, and then he began to

make stroke after stroke of the inscription with an intensity that was awesome, revealing, and moving.

I said there had always been a great mystery about his leaving the Metropolitan in 1915, and asked him if he would tell me why he left. "I could be millionaire," he said, "but I am somebody who could say no. In 1915 I find impossible to stay in Metropolitan: is no discipline. With me, yes; but with other conductors, no. I say to Gatti-Casazza: 'You need position; you stay. I do not need to stay; I go.' Later Otto Kahn come to me: 'Maestro, what I hear? Is impossible to believe you leave Metropolitan.' I say: 'When are performances of *Un Ballo in Maschera* and we must have five musicians to play on stage you say why we do not take five musicians from orchestra. I know: they tell me. In this theater I cannot work.' I go to Italy. In Milan I give concert for charity: I invite all musicians and singers for nothing; and Mr. Kahn send \$1,000, but I do not answer him. For five years I conduct for charity and do not make a penny. After war they ask me to come back to La Scala. I do not want to go; but they say I must. I begin with five operas; next year twelve; and I conduct ninety performances in season. Then other conductors conduct more and more, and I conduct only fifty performances. Then I feel I cannot take responsibility for season, and I resign."

He described the system of rehearsal: the productions of the first year required only one or two rehearsals the second year; and rehearsal time went to the new productions. "At Metropolitan when I repeat *Götterdämmerung* second year I have only [two?] rehearsals."

Toscanini's reference to Mahler as "crazy man" is the last comment of his about another conductor that I recall; and with the record of my experience in this matter all in I will say what I have concluded about it. It has been alleged that Toscanini spoke only ill of other conductors, and that this was evidence of the jealousy that showed itself further in his treatment of some of the eminences who were associated with him—notably Stokowski, Bruno Walter, Mengelberg. But in my experience Toscanini did *not* speak only ill of other conductors: he spoke well of Ansermet, whose enormous success with the press and the public should on the contrary have aroused the jealousy attributed to him; he spoke with especial warmth of Schuch, the one-time director of the Dresden Opera; he spoke of Nikisch as a good conductor, but criticized him for his occasional insufficient study of the score and for the acting on the podium that others have told me Nikisch indulged in; similarly he spoke well of De Sabata but disapprovingly of his violent gesticulation. And here we come to the point of the matter: in my experience, whenever Toscanini spoke ill of a conductor he did so on the basis of something the conductor had done that seemed to Toscanini dreadfully, shockingly, intolerably wrong. With Muck and certain others it was their wrong tempos; with A— it was the achieving of excitement by whipping up tempo; with Koussevitzky it was the musical ignorance exemplified by, among other things, the failure to interpolate a cadenza where it was indicated in the score.

Concerning Stokowski and Walter at NBC I can report no statement by Toscanini; but in the spring of 1943 one

of the serious musicians in the orchestra told me repeatedly about Stokowski's "line" of the moment, which was to exhort the orchestra not to be bound by the printed score, but instead to be creative, to improvise. This musician and others in the orchestra took Stokowski's "line" to be directed against Toscanini's principle of strict adherence to the printed score; and its consequence in practice was that the orchestra played with less than the absolute technical precision Toscanini demanded of it. For Toscanini, then, Stokowski was someone who not only advocated the violation of a principle Toscanini believed in, but, as a result, did not hold the orchestra to what Toscanini regarded as the proper technical standards.

Something of the same kind happened with Bruno Walter. In Salzburg in 1937 the American composer and conductor Hermann Hans Wetzler reported to me Toscanini's remark to him: "When Walter comes to something beautiful he melts. I suffer!" Nothing more perceptive was ever said about Walter; but it didn't keep Toscanini and Walter from being professionally associated for several seasons in Salzburg and from being warm personal friends, or keep Toscanini from inviting Walter to conduct the NBC Symphony. What ended all this, I was told at the time, was that during one of the periods when Walter was conducting the NBC Symphony in the broadcasts, Toscanini had to rehearse it for a concert in Newark, and was enraged by the technically unprecise playing, for which he held Walter responsible.

As for Mengelberg, his musical distortions and vulgarities must have been extremely distasteful to Toscanini; but

his departure from the New York Philharmonic, I was told at the time, resulted from his talking against Toscanini to the orchestra, which caused Toscanini to request the Philharmonic to choose between Mengelberg and himself.

And as for Mahler, the Toscanini remark I have quoted must surely have had additional musical causes beside Mahler's treatment of the *appoggiatura*; but it also characterized Mahler as a person; and all accounts describe Mahler as a morbidly unhappy, tormented and "difficult" man, whose behavior might have seemed "crazy" to Toscanini.

When I visited Toscanini late in October 1949, I found him playing an NBC recording of a broadcast of the *Love Scene* from Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet*. He was to broadcast the piece that week; also, Leonard Bernstein, who was going to conduct excerpts from *Romeo* that season, had come up the day before to ask Toscanini about his tempo in the Victor performance of the *Love Scene*; and they had compared the Victor *Love Scene* with the one from the 1947 broadcast of the entire work, and had found that the Victor was in fact faster. "I say is possible one day I am stupid," said Toscanini, who told me that in addition to playing the usual instrumental excerpts Bernstein was going to end with *Romeo in the Vault of the Capulets*. "I say is impossible to finish concert with *piano*; but he want to play this piece." And possibly it gave Toscanini the idea of playing it too; for a little later he said: "I will play all *Romeo and Juliet* next year again, because I am the only one who conduct this work." It was in this accidental way

that works were suggested to him for performance; and it wasn't surprising, therefore, that in the end they weren't performed—as Berlioz's *Romeo* wasn't the following year.

Later in the fall Toscanini broadcast Beethoven's *Eroica* again, presumably in order that he might record it for Victor. All through 1948-49, someone at Victor told me, the company hadn't approached Toscanini about recording, having concerned itself with Horowitz, Heifetz, Rubinstein, Iturbi, Mario Lanza and other greats. And so some of the outstanding performances of that year—including the *Eroica* and Schubert *Unfinished* of the spring series—had not been recorded. This had led me, in May, to write a letter of protest to David Sarnoff, president of RCA, who had replied that the *Eroica* would be recorded before Toscanini's departure for Europe. Unfortunately Toscanini had then slipped in the bathtub, injuring his arm; and the recording sessions had therefore been canceled. And so it was in November that Victor recorded an *Eroica* of less intensity and power than the one of the preceding February, though impressively powerful considered by itself.

Still later there was a rehearsal of the Prelude to *Parsifal* which caused one of the men in the orchestra to exclaim afterward that nobody but Toscanini could have conducted the piece beating not the usual eight but a slow four to the measure—a subtly inflected four that was hair-raising in the sustained power with which it filled out the intervals of time with life and continuity in the flow of the sound. (In April 1954, at the first rehearsal for his tragic final broadcast, he would attempt something similar with the Prelude to *Lohengrin*, and not be able to bring it off.)

During a few rehearsals in the spring series, for the first and only times, I stood behind the percussion section in the passageway between the stage of Studio 8H and an unused control room, from where I could see Toscanini's face—attentive, alert, apprehensively watchful in all directions—as he marshaled the playing along. And observing him in operation in this way I noticed one thing more. I had been aware of the cohesive tension in the musical progression forward; now I became aware of the lateral tension which held the ninety-odd players in precisely right relation to each other, and the strands of continuing sound in the precise balance that produced the transparency of texture characteristic of his performances.

A few moments of one of these rehearsals that I had occasion to describe at the time may be of interest. Winthrop Sargeant, then a writer for *Life*, had described, in *Time-Life* style, how a rehearsal began: "Toscanini glances quickly over the assembled orchestra and, without further preamble, the baton descends like the knife of a guillotine." And Sargeant had also contended that Toscanini didn't use with an orchestra the explanatory technique of other conductors—that where they "will describe what they wish to obtain and the method to be pursued in achieving it, Toscanini will produce the effect . . . by setting up in the player's consciousness an emotional reaction which automatically produces it." Among the rehearsals I attended from 1942 on there were some at which Toscanini said good morning or afternoon, waited for the orchestra to become still and attentive, and "without further preamble" began to conduct. But more often I saw him do what he

did on March 2, 1950, when, after his good morning, he picked up the score of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, found the fourth measure after letter M in the third movement, explained to the flutes and clarinets that in this measure he wanted them to break off the held G-sharp in order to attack the subsequent descending scale with an accent, and had them do this for him several times; then found the similar measure at letter Z and had the strings and woodwinds play it in the same way; then began to conduct the movement from the beginning, but stopped after the second measure because the strings had not been precisely together, began again, stopped again, and told the violas: "You make the bow jump too high," illustrating by bouncing his baton on his finger; then began again and—the violas now being precisely together with the violins—went on, but stopped after the third measure to tell the oboes and bassoons they were not playing an accurate two against the other woodwinds' three, and got this measure played correctly; and so on thereafter. And I don't recall a rehearsal without its explanations and discussions with the first-desk string-players of methods of bowing that would produce the phrasing or accentuation or lack of accentuation Toscanini wanted. *

A few weeks after this rehearsal of the *Pathétique* an amusing incident occurred during a rehearsal of the second

* But Marsh—on the basis of experience unknown to me—writes, in *Toscanini and the Art of Orchestral Performance*, that unlike Rodzinski, whose knowledge of English made him "able to analyze difficulties and tell the men how to cope with them," Toscanini had an orchestra "simply [play] for many minutes at a time, going over works again and again until [he] was satisfied."

movement of Debussy's *Ibéria*. In the eighth measure the horn plays a motif which rises to D-sharp; two measures later the cellos mutter the same motif, but with D-natural instead of D-sharp; and on this occasion when the horn played the D-sharp Toscanini stopped, told the player he should have played D-natural, and began the movement again. This time again the horn played D-sharp; and again Toscanini stopped and told the player he should have played D-natural, and began the movement a third time. By now the atmosphere was tense; and when the horn played D-sharp again I was prepared for an explosion—instead of which Toscanini continued to conduct without a word: he had evidently remembered that it was D-natural for the cellos but D-sharp for the horn.

The spring series ended with the performance, on April 1 and 8, of *Falstaff*. From the way Toscanini spoke of this opera it seemed to be the one he cared about most; his performance of it had been one of his most famous achievements; and this one too was dazzlingly and enchantingly swift and light and clear. It is one of the performances in which some critics have reported hearing inexpressive singing that betrays the singers' inexperience in their parts and their terror of Toscanini; but listening to it again after a few years, when it was issued in Victor LM-6111, confirmed my original impression of the excellent singing of the entire cast except the tenor who sang Fenton, and made me freshly aware of the beauty and expressive inflection and coloring of Valdengo's singing, the powerful dramatic projection of Cloe Elmo, the technical and musical

security of Teresa Stich-Randall's use of her exquisite lyric soprano. It was possible to argue that a weightier voice than Valdengo's would have been even better for Falstaff, and a less youthful one than Guarerra's better for Ford; but not to say, as one critic did, that the performance was accurate but had very little more to recommend it.

And *Falstaff* was followed by the transcontinental tour which began with the concert in New York's Carnegie Hall on April 14 and ended with the one in Philadelphia's Academy of Music on May 27. During this season the years of work under Toscanini had begun to be audible in the orchestra's playing, as the men themselves realized: "You know," I heard one of them exclaim, "we're beginning to sound like a symphony orchestra!" And the truth of this statement was demonstrated right at the start of the New York concert—in the performance of Rossini's Overture to *L'Italiana in Algeri*, which had a precision and finish, a refinement of tone and subtlety of nuance, a sensitiveness to Toscanini's direction, that made it possible to think one was hearing the Philharmonic in 1936. However the performances at this concert—including the Beethoven *Eroica* and Debussy *La Mer*—didn't reach the heights of the ones at later concerts, after the weeks in which Toscanini and the orchestra continued to rehearse and play the works they had prepared for the tour. I was told of an especially wonderful *Eroica* in Pasadena; and at the final concert in Philadelphia I heard a *La Mer* that was phenomenal as a realization of the piece, as an exhibition of virtuoso orchestral performance, and in the relaxed

ease with which conductor and orchestra operated. The NBC Symphony had become one of the world's great orchestras; and it remained that to the end.

That year a collection of my *Nation* articles had been published under the title *Music in the Nation*; and when a copy was sent to Toscanini I wrote him that he was to consider this book too as dedicated to him. I had a telephone call from him, in the course of which he said he had been reading the book: "What you say about me is too much. But why is not inscribed?" I explained that the copy he had received had come from the publisher, and that I was inscribing to him a special leather-bound copy which the publisher had given me. And when I sent it to him I said I had been thinking of what he might do now with the first copy of the trade edition, and it had occurred to me that he might inscribe it to me.

I didn't see him that spring until the day he was to leave on the tour, which I believe was Easter Sunday. I had volunteered to Walter Toscanini to put into order, while his father was away, the 16-inch acetate records of the NBC broadcasts, some of which were in a closet next to Toscanini's study, and the rest piled high in complete disorder everywhere in the room. And on this Sunday morning I went up to discuss with Walter how the job was to be done. While I was talking to him and to the secretary, Miss Eugenia Gale, in the study, Toscanini appeared—not in his usual sober black, but very natty in light gray trousers, gray shirt, and tan shoes with gray cloth tops.

"Did you hear *Falstaff*?" he asked, his face lighting up.

"Yes, it was very beautiful," I answered.

"Ah," he said, "for me is *most* beautiful opera!"

At this moment a messenger delivered a parcel of test pressings on which Victor wanted his approval before he left. "Yes," said Toscanini, "I want to hear. Find G-minor: I want to hear finale." Walter found the record and began to play it; but Toscanini interrupted: "They change machine; *allóra* is different sound and I cannot hear." So we moved to his bedroom, which now had the equipment he was accustomed to. The room was in a state of great disorder and commotion with preparations for the trip; nevertheless the record was played; and as we stood listening I noticed the two copies of my book on a table. After the finale Toscanini asked for another record of the G-minor, which couldn't be found; then he remembered wanting to hear the first movement of Schubert's *Unfinished*, "because first time oboe play too loud: must be *piano* and is *forte*." The record was found and played; Toscanini stood conducting and listening intently, and pointed as the oboe began its first statement *forte*; and when the oboe played the repetition of the statement *piano* he pointed again and said: "So is correct—*piano*. I want to hear second time"—meaning the second take, which couldn't be found.

The playing of test pressings ended, Walter and I returned to the study to resume our discussion of what to do with the NBC records. After a short time Toscanini reappeared, holding in his hand the first copy of my book. Handing it to me with a trace of a smile, but saying noth-

ing, he again left the room. And when I opened the book to the first blank page I saw that he had originally written his name diagonally across it, and had now added below his name an inscription to the author of the book who, he wrote, had made him blush many times as he had read it.

I saw Toscanini again a few days after the final concert of the tour in Philadelphia. I had written him enthusiastically about the *La Mer*, and had reproached him for the terrible thing he had done to me by playing Brahms's First in place of the Fourth that had been announced. And I went up to Riverdale to report to Walter Toscanini what had been accomplished with the NBC records. I hadn't been able to complete the job, and continued with it after Toscanini left for Italy; and I found not only some of the wartime glass-based acetates broken, but a large number of records in varying states of deterioration caused by the sulphuric acid in the paper of the envelopes. It was this deterioration that led Walter Toscanini to transfer all his father's recordings from disc to tape; and unfortunately the first Victor engineer who did the work for him had ideas about beefing up Toscanini's Victor recordings with echo chamber and peaking of treble, and seems to have been able to persuade Toscanini to substitute his in some instances monstrously falsified "enhanced" versions for the originals.

When I walked into the office on the top floor I found Miss Gale and a man checking the names on the photographs (amusing ones of Toscanini seated in the ski lift at Sun Valley) that Toscanini had inscribed to the members

of the orchestra in remembrance of the tour. As I stood talking to Walter Toscanini his father entered the room, and with barely a nod to the visitor whom his nearsighted eyes didn't recognize he addressed himself to Miss Gale. But at that moment he heard and recognized my voice; and with a smile he came over to shake hands with me.

"I will tell you why I play Brahms First in Philadelphia. Somebody ask for Brahms Fourth in Washington; *allóra* I play First in Philadelphia. But why you do not like First? Is beautiful music. Of course Fourth is better—finale has wonderful harmony [I think that by 'harmony' Toscanini meant writing for winds]. But First is beautiful too. You write once—a word—'bombastic'! But no-o-o!" I said it was the first movement that I found bombastic. "Oh no-o-o! Is beautiful!" And the second movement I found excessively sentimental. "Oh no-o-o! When is played too slow, yes; but in right tempo is beautiful! And Third Symphony—" I said I didn't like the third movement of this one. "Oh no-o-o! In right tempo is beautiful!" And he demonstrated by singing it to me, as everyone in the room grinned.

"Brahms's symphonies," Toscanini went on, "are first after Beethoven. Schumann? You like Fourth, but—" and he caricatured the principal theme of the first movement. I reminded him of the slow movement. "Yes, is beautiful, but—" and again he caricatured the first movement. "I play only one symphony of Schumann, the—the—" "The Third?" I suggested. "Yes, the Third. And Second has beautiful Andante, but—" and he caricatured the first movement. "Schumann: no! Schubert? Is not like Mozart,

who write too easy—without work. (Beethoven: you can hear how he worked!) But no harmony.” [One would suppose he said Schubert *was* like Mozart in the ease of his writing; but I have given what my notes have. His thought on Schubert isn’t clear, especially from a man who played the C-major Symphony at his very first orchestral concert and so many times thereafter.] Mendelssohn? No. *Italian* Symphony? I object as Italian to saltarello finale. When I play cello I play once in E-flat Quartet, and I hear is weak: I never play Mendelssohn again—until I hear movement with theme like *Parsifal*——” “The *Reformation* Symphony?” “Yes, *Reformation* Symphony.”

Later, “Tonight I record *La Mer*. And tomorrow Brahms Fourth, because in Washington orchestra play beautifully, and I think this performance should be recorded.” “Yes,” I said, “but the performance of *Ibéria* is more important to record.” “Ye-e-es; but I want to record Brahms Fourth because orchestra play so beautifully.” “Yes,” I persisted, “but *Ibéria*.” He also persisted; and this impasse too was not resolved.

“After tour,” he said, “I am not tired. But for one broadcast I am tired. Three rehearsals and one broadcast I am more tired as six weeks of tour.” This led to a discussion of the reason I mentioned earlier in this book: the tension of the first public performance at the broadcast, as against the relaxed feeling with the repetitions after a first performance.

At this point Miss Gale told him he would have to inscribe three more photographs, and gave him the names. With a rueful smile he said: “After writing so much I

am tired." I said I had brought along a photograph which I liked especially, and I wondered whether he would agree. He watched with interest as I extracted from the envelope a photograph of him at a rehearsal, demonstrating something to the cellists, with his left hand holding his baton as though it were a cello and his right hand holding an imaginary bow. "Oh ye-e-es," he said. "I remember this. Where is it?" "It must be either Vienna or Salzburg," I said. "Yes, Vienna or Salzburg." "I wonder if you would be kind enough to sign it for me." He didn't answer but merely took the photograph from me and left the room. I resumed my conversation with Walter; and after some time Toscanini reappeared, holding the photograph in his hand and exclaiming: "I look everywhere—in letters—in books—in telephone book—everywhere, but I cannot find your first name!" So he had inscribed it to B. H. Haggin.

Again he left the room; and a little later he reappeared with a paper which he gave to Miss Gale and discussed with her briefly. Then, as he turned from her he said with a smile and a shrug: "I am supposed to have bad character." Another shrug: "Is not true—but they say." And he left.

That night I went to the recording session in Studio 8H. This was the first reassembling of the orchestra since the tour; and so there was a happy atmosphere in the place and much excited talk. The performance of *La Mer* that was recorded was the phenomenal one I had heard in Philadelphia a few days before, but with its sound in the Academy of Music now altered in Studio 8H. I didn't stay for the recording of Saint-Saëns's *Danse Macabre*, but went again the next night for the recording of Brahms's Fourth,

and was dumbfounded when I was told that not Brahms's Fourth was to be recorded—but Debussy's *Ibéria*!

When the first movement had been recorded a break was announced for playback. There was a delay; and Toscanini left the studio, while the men of the orchestra drifted off the stage and stood around on the floor in groups. Then the playback began; and it had proceeded for only a few measures when Toscanini came rushing into the studio in great agitation, gesticulating with his right arm in protest, and exclaiming: "Is wrong tempo! Machine play too slow!" Actually he had played the movement in a delightfully lilting tempo which—I was assured by members of the orchestra—was the one in which he had played it the several times on the tour; but listening from the outside of the performance, so to speak, he had now found it too slow. The orchestra was quickly reassembled and rehearsed in a faster tempo; the movement was then recorded a second time; and this performance satisfied him. And the intense feeling about playing too slowly continued—not only for the recording of the rest of *Ibéria*, but for the remaking of the first movement of Schubert's *Unfinished*.

My meeting with Toscanini the day before left me with every reason to suppose I would see him again in the fall; but my letters the next year brought no answering telephone call or invitation to visit him, and for reasons that remained undisclosed to me I never had an opportunity to speak to him again. There was the possibility that something I wrote angered him; but this seemed improbable when I received one of the Christmas cards he sent out from Italy the year after his retirement. On one page was a photograph of

Toscanini looking at an opened score with a photograph of Verdi nearby, and reproduced underneath this the theme of the closing fugue of *Falstaff* with the words *Tutto nel mondo è burla l'uom è* copied by Toscanini; and reproduced on the opposite page was his handwritten Christmas and New Year greeting, signature and date.

ADDENDA

REHEARSALS AND PERFORMANCES OF THE LAST YEARS

Though I had no further meetings with Toscanini I continued to attend rehearsals. He was inactive in the fall of 1950, for reasons which were at first reported to be anger at the transfer of the broadcasts from Studio 8H (which NBC had converted into a television studio) to Carnegie Hall, and from Saturday at six-thirty to Monday at ten, and which were later reported to be trouble with a knee. I cannot say whether these reports were correct; but I can say why they were believable. The men of the orchestra told me they hated Studio 8H because they couldn't hear each other; and one of the pleasures of the tour had been the experiences of playing in several fine auditoriums in which they said they had heard details in performances that they had never heard before. But Toscanini, they said, liked Studio 8H because standing on the podium *he* could hear everything very clearly. In addition, I was told, he felt that just as Carnegie Hall was the Philharmonic's place, 8H was *his* place; and I remember hearing about recording sessions scheduled for Carnegie Hall which at the last min-

ute he insisted on transferring to 8H. These were the reasons I knew about that may have caused him to object to the move to Carnegie Hall, which one would have expected him to welcome since it was so good for the broadcasts. Monday at ten also was better for them than Saturday at six-thirty: it was a time when music-lovers were free to listen not only in the East but in other parts of the country where it was nine and eight (if, that is, the broadcasts were carried live). But we have seen that when NBC sold the Sunday-at-five spot it convinced Toscanini that more people listened Saturday at six-thirty; and he now insisted on NBC's moving the broadcasts back to that time. As for the knee trouble, there was visible evidence of it when he did resume conducting—in the fact that his left hand frequently grasped the railing around the podium, presumably to relieve the strain on the left knee.

Toscanini may have been unhappy in Carnegie Hall, but for the orchestra and the listener the place was a pleasure. I retain in my memory the beautiful sound of Beethoven's Fourth at the rehearsals for the performance of February 3, 1951—in particular the silken, luminous sound of the violins; and my reason for remembering it is that on this occasion the performance had to be broadcast from a tape which transmitted a muffled falsification of the sound I had heard, and which was the source of the recording later issued by Victor.

I remember also certain rehearsals in the fall. Toscanini returned from Italy with his knee trouble gone, his powers operating with amazing energy; and the virtuosity of the orchestra and its sensitiveness to his direction made possi-

ble an almost casual achievement of the magic that is so difficult to achieve in Berlioz's *Queen Mab*. They also made it possible for even first readings to exhibit the precision and tonal beauty that I remember hearing at the first rehearsal of Dvořák's Symphonic Variations; and at the first rehearsal of the Prelude to Act 3 of *Die Meistersinger* the integrated sound of the brass section, plastically shaped and sensitively inflected like the sound of one instrument, took my breath away.

And yet when the performance of Rossini's *Semiramide* Overture recorded by Victor in the fall of 1951 was issued a few years later and was compared with the 1936 Philharmonic performance, it was astonishing to hear the NBC Symphony's playing—seemingly unsurpassable—surpassed right at the start, in the slow introduction, by the subtleties of attack, inflection and coloring of the Philharmonic horns, and later, in the Allegro, by the energy of the Philharmonic violins in their soft opening statements, the sensitized response of the full orchestra. Nor was this all. Nothing, seemingly, could be more effective than the pacing and shaping of the piece in the 1951 performance; and so it was astonishing to hear how much more effective the Philharmonic performance of the introduction was with its relaxed expansiveness involving great elasticity of tempo, than the NBC Symphony performance with its faster, tighter simplicity involving only slight modifications of tempo. But the most striking and significant difference occurred at the point in the Allegro where the long concluding crescendo of the exposition breaks off for the series of violin statements leading to the recapitulation: in the 1951

performance these violin statements were inflected not only without the breadth but without the force and sustained tension they had in the 1936 performance, revealing once again the lessened energy that had manifested itself a couple of times before—in the V-J Day *Eroica* when it was compared with the 1944 performance; in the 1948 Strauss *Don Quixote* when it was compared with the 1938 performance. And let me emphasize that such occasional lessened powers and effectiveness in the later years were something one became aware of only when the performance was compared with an earlier one. If one listened to the 1951 Verdi *Requiem* or the 1953 Beethoven *Missa Solemnis* without comparing it with the 1940 *Requiem* or *Missa*, one was aware only of phenomenal powers operating to produce a performance that was wonderfully right, effective and beautiful, and playing by the orchestra that was something to marvel at.

Nor did the later performance always reveal lessened powers and effectiveness when compared with the earlier ones: the opposite also happened on occasion, as the performance of the *Tristan* Prelude and Finale that Toscanini recorded early in 1952 demonstrates. For more than thirty years we have been able to get an idea of the Toscanini *Tristan* that Carl Van Vechten called overwhelming only from Toscanini's performances of the Prelude and Finale. I recall that the performance of these two excerpts was in fact overwhelming the first time in 1926; it was overwhelming each of the numerous times thereafter; and most overwhelming, it seems to me, is the performance that comes off LM-6020. For comparison of this performance with

earlier ones preserved on records reveals that the performance changed in the course of time, and that the change was of an unusual kind: whereas tempos generally tended to become faster in Toscanini's later performances, in the *Tristan* Prelude and Finale they became much slower, giving the music increased expressive force. I retained from the first performance in 1926 a recollection of a marked and exciting acceleration in the Prelude soon after the direction *Belebend* in the score; and this is confirmed by the records with the performance broadcast in 1938, the one recorded in 1942, the one at the Red Cross concert in 1944: in these performances the Prelude, after the introductory statements, proceeds with great slowness and weight, with powerful inflection and tension of phrase, with tremendous expressive force, until in the eleventh measure after *Belebend* it begins to accelerate rapidly to a much faster tempo in which it continues thereafter in exciting fashion, broadening out momentarily for the climax of the *meno forte* passage, then resuming its rapid course in the final crescendo, and broadening out again in the last two measures of this crescendo for the climax of the piece. But in 1952 the acceleration after *Belebend* is slight, so that the piece continues with slowness, breadth and powerful inflection—which is to say with more powerful expressive effect than in 1938—broadening out tremendously at the climax of the *meno forte* passage, then resuming its slow and powerful course in the final crescendo, and broadening out even more tremendously for the climax of the piece. And the 1952 Finale also is enormously slower than the one of 1938—with, consequently, more breadth and power, and

with increased expressive effect of exaltation and transfiguration.

These changes—and others concerned with smaller details—are not only fascinating in themselves but moving in what they tell us about Toscanini. The *Tristan* piece was one of those Toscanini played most; but even after many performances his mind continued to work at it, to change it for increased esthetic and expressive effect; and the next performance, down to the last, was not a perfunctory routine act but a fresh application of attention and energy. *

Fascinating and moving in the same ways are the changes in the great performance of Schubert's C-major early in

* But Marsh, in *Toscanini and the Art of Orchestral Performance*, writes concerning the *Tristan* performance in LM-6020: "In Alma Mahler's biography of her husband, we learn of Mahler's misgivings about Toscanini's performances of *Tristan* . . . I share Mahler's reservations. The performance (there is no reason to believe it has changed in the intervening years) is over-refined, the antiseptic souvenir of passion rather than its full-blooded actuality. In *Tristan* this will not do, although it is easily understood when we see that these two works rank fourth and fifth in frequency in Toscanini's repertory: they have had all the life played out of them." This is not the only instance of Marsh's building an elaborate structure of facts, ideas and inferences that turn out to be incorrect, and not the only time one is reminded of Bernard Shaw's comment, in a discussion of Nietzsche, on how a philosopher could "build some . . . systematization of his . . . ideas over the abyss of his own nescience."

Moreover, what Alma Mahler actually writes about the Toscanini *Tristan* which the Mahlers heard is that "the nuances in his Wagner were distressing. His style has been simplified since those days." And from this it seems clear that when Marsh objects to the "over-refined . . . antiseptic" Toscanini *Tristan* of his imagination, he isn't sharing Mahler's reservations about the richly detailed, powerfully expressive phrasing of the real Toscanini *Tristan* which the Mahlers heard.

1953, recorded on LM-1835—the changes one discovers when one compares it with the great performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1941. Toscanini played this work at his very first orchestral concert in 1896; and one would think that by 1941 his mind had achieved finality about it. But the changes in 1953 make it clear that he had continued to think about it, and in this thought to be concerned with an esthetic end—the esthetic beauty, for him, of a movement played in a single tempo with only slight modifications that are the more effective for the steadiness from which they depart. This single tempo in the Allegro of the first movement is—again in surprising reversal of his tendency toward faster tempos in later years—slower in 1953 than in 1941, and is accelerated only a little in the *Più moto* coda, which means that it has to slow down only a little for the concluding proclamations of the theme of the introduction. But for this satisfaction Toscanini sacrifices the greater momentum created by the faster 1941 tempo in the Allegro, and especially by its greater acceleration in the coda, where from measure 589 the canonic series of overlapping statements of winds, then violins, then low strings are bound together by the fast tempo into a single large-spanned utterance that is tremendously exciting. On the other hand, the single steady tempo in the finale is faster in 1953 than in 1941, with only a slight acceleration therefore in the coda, and only a slight broadening in the groups of four *sfz* unison C's. Thus the movement has all the momentum it has to have; but on the other hand the slightly more relaxed tempo in 1941 accelerates more in the coda, only to take one's breath away

with the enormous slowing down and distention of the four unison C's, which creates each time a hair-raising tension that is released in the answering tutti in fast tempo again. Listening to the two performances one may decide that the earlier one was even greater than the later one; but one cannot fail to recognize that the later one was in its own way one of Toscanini's greatest.

And in the fall of 1953 there were other great performances—the wonderfully clarified Strauss *Don Quixote*, Berlioz *Harold in Italy* and Beethoven *Eroica*, and a Beethoven *Coriolan* Overture with breadth and distentions that gave it a power beyond any I recalled. I heard the rehearsals of *Don Quixote*, and still remember the orchestra's great first cellist, Frank Miller, seated out in front, grunting audibly (in the empty hall) with the effort of his huge body that produced playing extraordinary in its elegance of style as well as the tensile strength of its tone and the cohesive tension of its phrasing. But these rehearsals were my last: a letter from Walter Toscanini regretted having to inform me that nobody was to be allowed henceforth at the Thursday afternoon and Friday morning rehearsals, but that I would be on the list of guests invited to the Saturday afternoon dress rehearsal (the broadcasts had been moved to Sunday at six-thirty). He didn't say why; and it was not until late in the season that events suggested what the reason may have been.

After an interval of four years there was again, on January 17 and 24, 1954, a performance of an opera—Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Concerning this it was no less con-

siderable a critic than Virgil Thomson who wrote that the "almost circus-like showmanship" of the orchestra performance had made demands of volume and bravura which the singers had been unable to meet, with the result that in Carnegie Hall "they were pretty thoroughly overpowered" and "were obliged so consistently to force their volume that much of the singing I did hear was both ugly in sound and only approximate in pitch." I was in Carnegie Hall too, and can testify that in some of the climaxes the singers *were* overpowered by the orchestral tuttis that have overpowered the singers in every performance everywhere, but that in the more lightly scored passages at other times—which is to say most of the time—the orchestral accompaniment was beautifully adjusted to the singing, whose every *piano* reached me at the back of the hall without the slightest forcing. If there were occasional unlovely vocal sounds and deviations from pitch it was because Robert Merrill's baritone had become rough and coarse and Herva Nelli simply didn't always sing squarely on pitch.

This review, I might add, was typical of Thomson's performances with Toscanini. He was a brilliantly perceptive critic when his mind operated on the real facts before him; but there were occasions when it was concerned not with real facts but with others that existed only in his head, and when he applied to them general ideas with no more basis in reality; and Toscanini's performances were such occasions. It is anyone's privilege not to like a Toscanini performance; but the performance and the reasons for disliking it must be real. When some Germans objected to the luminous clarity and grace of Toscanini's *Meistersinger*

or his Brahms as being unsuitable for music they contended called rather for breadth and solidity, they were applying understandable and valid criteria to correctly heard performances. But what Thomson did for almost fifteen years was to apply imaginary ideas to imaginary Toscanini performances. The *Ballo in Maschera* he objected to was largely imaginary; and an example of imaginary ideas was the business of the marriage of historical and literary with musical culture in the Great Tradition of Wagner, Von Bülow, Nikisch and Beecham that, according to Thomson, was lacking in Toscanini's conducting, but that I suspect was lacking also in Wagner's, Von Bülow's, Nikisch's and Beecham's. Toscanini's actual style of performance, which gave a piece of music plastically coherent shape, Thomson described with the term 'streamlining,' which was incorrect; and this term was part of numerous schematizations by pure invention—e.g., "when one memorizes everything, one acquires a great awareness of music's run-through. One runs it through in the mind constantly; and one finds in that way a streamlined rendering that is wholly independent of detail and even of specific significance, a disembodied version that is all shape and no texture. Later, in rehearsal, one returns to texture; and one takes care that it serve always as neutral surfacing for the shape. But shape is what any piece is always about that one has memorized through the eye and the inner ear." Actually, Toscanini away from the podium did not keep running through pieces of music in his mind, but kept reading them in the score, and in this constant study of the printed score was concerned always with texture—i.e., with this bassoon part or

that viola part buried in the tutti that must be made clearly audible in the performance.

What Thomson started, others continued: I was told of one insignificant young commentator on the radio whose way of making himself appear big was to talk about Toscanini's lack of culture. The writing about Toscanini was always one of the forms of exploitation of him: formerly the way to show one's understanding was to praise him, today it is to find fault with him; and the attacks reveal as little understanding of the Toscanini operation and what it produced as did most of the praise.

It was interesting, one Sunday afternoon in March 1954, to listen to the broadcast of Cantelli's performance with the New York Philharmonic of the Mozart Divertimento K.287 that Toscanini had played, and to listen later in the day to the broadcast of Toscanini's performances of Verdi's *Te Deum* and Vivaldi's Concerto Grosso No. 11 from *L'Estro Armonico*. For the two broadcasts threw into sharp relief the difference between the two conductors. The relaxed flow in the fast movements of the Mozart piece had lyricism and grace, as against the powerful impulse that had operated in Toscanini's treatment of them; and to the Adagio also, which Cantelli made a beautifully shaped and eloquent vocal aria, Toscanini's power had imparted a largeness of span, a tension, a grandeur that had made its expressive effect overwhelming. And that power, creating a continuous tension in the flow of sound, and doing this in the quietest music no less than in the most forceful, was impressively evident in the lovely slow movement of the

Vivaldi concerto no less than in the Allegros and in the *Te Deum*.

One heard the power being exercised in those pieces on that Sunday—exercised to hold the members of the orchestra in precisely balanced relation to one another, and to keep every sound in the progression in coherent relation to the next. But the next Sunday one heard that the power was *not* being exercised in the performance of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique*, in which there was no continuity of impetus and tension, and one sound was not in coherent relation to the next. When I asked a musician in the orchestra about this he confirmed my impression: "He was all there in the rehearsal, but not in the performance." And so there was this to prepare me for what happened at the first rehearsal for the final broadcast on April 4.

I heard all three rehearsals as they came over a line from Carnegie Hall. At the first one, on Thursday afternoon, Toscanini began with the Prelude to *Lohengrin*, and announced: "I will conduct *alla breve*"—meaning a slow two to the measure instead of the usual four. It will be recalled that he had done something similar in the Prelude to *Parsifal* four years earlier, beating instead of the usual eight to the measure a slow four with sustained power that had filled out the intervals of time in exciting fashion. A member of the orchestra had exclaimed on that occasion that nobody but Toscanini could have done this; but now at the rehearsal of the *Lohengrin* Prelude it became evident that even Toscanini no longer could do it: after a few measures there was discord and confusion, the playing stopped, and I heard an apprehensive murmur go through the orchestra. "I con-

duct *alla breve*," Toscanini repeated; and again the performance broke down in discord and confusion after a few measures, and I heard the murmur go through the orchestra. This time, as I recall it, Toscanini first demonstrated by singing the music as he beat time, then began again to conduct, but stopped to tell the violins to play the opening A-major chords without vibrato, which he said was suitable for *Inferno* but not for *Paradiso*. And I think the next time he began he was able to keep the performance going to the end.

When, some time later, I asked a musician in the orchestra about the breakdowns, he explained: "He didn't beat a two-to-the-measure that we could follow; and he himself began to follow our playing in four to the measure—which threw us off completely." Nor was this incident the only one of its kind that season. And so it suggested a possible reason for the decision not to allow anyone at rehearsals.

The *Lohengrin* Prelude was followed by the Prelude to *Die Meistersinger*; and I remember my surprise that Toscanini did nothing about the nerveless, poor playing. Then *Dawn and Rhine Journey* from *Die Götterdämmerung*, in which there were several stops for corrections that I don't remember, and one stop for something that was to have great importance two days later. The place was the entrance of the kettledrum in the passage immediately after the off-stage horn calls; and Toscanini contended that the timpanist had come in too soon. "It's the same part I always play," said the timpanist. "Maybe," said Toscanini. "All right, I'm always—" I didn't catch the timpanist's last word but presumed it was "wrong." Eventually the passage

was played in the way Toscanini considered correct, and the piece was completed.

My notes for the rehearsal on Friday morning have "power all there" next to the Overture and Bacchanale of *Tannhäuser*, and again next to the *Götterdämmerung* piece; and that suffices to describe the different playing I heard that morning. There was one stop in the *Rhine Journey*, but not at the point where the trouble with the kettledrum had occurred the day before.

And so we come to Saturday afternoon's dramatic dress rehearsal. Power was all there again in the performances of the *Lohengrin* Prelude, the *Forest Murmurs* from *Siegfried*, and the *Götterdämmerung* piece as far as Toscanini got in it. My notes record his stopping at one point in the *Dawn* portion and shouting: "Staccato! Staccato! *Ignoranti, tutti!*" And they record his stopping in a fury at the point where the trouble with the kettledrum had occurred two days before. While Toscanini raged I heard Frank Miller call out to the timpanist: "Make it thirteen measures' rest instead of twelve." Twelve was right, and the timpanist had waited that number of measures; but Toscanini mistakenly thought it should be one more; and Miller was telling the timpanist to do what would seem right to Toscanini. "*È vergogna! Vergogna!*"* he shouted. And when the passage was repeated, as he thought, correctly, he stopped again and exclaimed: "*Finalmente!*" Then, in bitter anger: "*L'ultima prova!*" ** There were long moments of silence;

* "It's a shame! A shame!"

** "The last rehearsal!"

then I heard a murmur in the orchestra which told me something had happened; and when it swelled into conversation I realized that Toscanini was no longer on the podium. I heard a voice from a loud-speaker in Carnegie Hall announce the end of the rehearsal and ask the audience to leave but instruct the orchestra to remain on the stage. Time passed; then I heard the voice from the speaker again, this time dismissing the orchestra. The rehearsal was not completed.

To my ears, as I listened to the broadcast the next day, power was not exercised in the performances of the *Lohengrin* Prelude, the *Siegfried* excerpt, the *Götterdämmerung* piece, and the *Tannhäuser* Overture and Bacchanale. Nevertheless, when the climax of the Bacchanale had subsided into the quiet concluding section, I was unprepared for the shock of hearing the discordant evidence of instruments making wrong entrances. It lasted only a couple of moments; but it created an apprehensiveness about what was happening in Carnegie Hall; and these fears were seemingly confirmed when the performance suddenly was cut off, the voice of Ben Grauer announced that "technical difficulties" had necessitated an interruption of the broadcast, and a recorded performance of Brahms's First Symphony came over the air. I had witnessed the inconceivable: a Toscanini performance that had broken down. But suddenly the Brahms stopped and I was hearing the conclusion of the Bacchanale, which apparently had *not* broken down. The piece ended, was applauded, and was followed by a nerveless playing of the notes of the *Meistersinger* Prelude, which concluded the broadcast.

From musicians in the orchestra I learned some of the things that had happened in Carnegie Hall. As early as the *Forest Murmurs* Toscanini had failed to beat a couple of changes of time signature, but with no bad consequences because the orchestra had played correctly. In the *Bacchanale*, when the orchestra had become aware that he was no longer conducting—his face showing his mind not to be in contact with the performance, his right arm gradually dropping to his side, his left hand covering his eyes—it had managed to keep going past the few wrong entrances, playing correctly after that; and Toscanini had begun to beat time again. Then, in the *Meistersinger* Prelude he had seemed to summon all his strength in the grim determination to beat time through the piece; and he had accomplished this, but not the conducting of a musical performance. (Actually he did not beat time to the very end of the piece, but was already off the podium when the orchestra was playing the final chords.) And through other sources it became known that when Toscanini had stopped conducting in the *Bacchanale*, Cantelli, in the control booth, had lost his head and insisted on the performance being taken off the air.

It seemed clear that at this tragic broadcast Toscanini had suffered a recurrence of the failing of his powers that had manifested itself now and then during that season. But it is possible that the failing this time was caused by the emotional strain he was under, which may also have been responsible for the happenings at the dress rehearsal the day before. One source of the strain was of course the fact that this was the end—the last rehearsal, the last broadcast;

another was the heart attack suffered by Mrs. Walter Toscanini, whom Toscanini was very fond of. Emotional strain, or lessened strength, or both were evident in the signature—formerly sharply energetic, now wavering, blurred, unclear—on his letter of resignation, which NBC sent out in facsimile with David Sarnoff's reply. It was reported that throughout the day of the broadcast Toscanini had been undecided whether to conduct the concert; and it would have been better if he had not conducted it.

Two eyewitnesses have given different and astonishingly incorrect accounts of the happenings of those last two days. Vincent Sheean, in *First and Last Love* (Random House, 1956), has it that Toscanini at the broadcast broke down at precisely the point in the Bacchanale at which he had ended the rehearsal the day before—when in fact he didn't conduct the Bacchanale at all at the dress rehearsal. And Chotzinoff, in *Toscanini: An Intimate Portrait*, writes concerning the performance of the Bacchanale that the anxieties Toscanini had aroused before the broadcast were "routed" by what he observed from the control room—"the powerful gyrations of his baton, the mystic behavior of his left hand, and the subtle conspiratorial expressions of his eyes and lips." But then, says Chotzinoff, Toscanini faltered, and the orchestra "tried desperately to coalesce and reach the end in unity . . . The attempt, beset by self-consciousness and fear, was a failure. In the soft cacophony that ensued, the Maestro ceased conducting and put his hand to his eyes. The men stopped playing and the house was engulfed in terrible silence . . ." The facts are that the orchestra

continued to play and succeeded in finishing the Bacchanale, after which the hall was filled by the audience's applause.

This is not the only instance of inaccuracy in Chotzinoff's book. Telling how in November 1937 Toscanini cabled from Italy a request to be released from his contract because he had received a report that the high cost of the new orchestra and its conductor was causing some NBC employees to lose their jobs, Chotzinoff writes: "I wired that, far from causing one man to lose his job at NBC, his engagement had led the company to take on, besides a full symphony orchestra, a number of people to meet the increased demands of the engineering, publicity, and press departments." Actually NBC did not take on a full symphony orchestra for Toscanini in addition to its staff orchestra: what it took on was a number of replacements and additions for the group that was set up within that staff orchestra as the NBC Symphony. (Moreover the staff men who were replaced presumably did lose their jobs.)

Nor is such inaccuracy all that can be objected to in the book. Its stories about Toscanini's inconsiderate or bad-tempered treatment of the people around him may be more accurate than Chotzinoff's account of the breakdown of the performance of the *Tannhäuser* Bacchanale and the silence in Carnegie Hall at the final broadcast; but whereas other reviewers of the book found the stories damaging to Toscanini, I find them damaging also to Chotzinoff. That is, I don't think it was admirable of Chotzinoff to accept

mistreatment he didn't have to accept, and later, with Toscanini still alive, to reveal this mistreatment to the world and thus violate the privacy that Toscanini had expected a friend to preserve.

THE BROADCASTS AND RECORDINGS

Replying on March 29, 1954, to Toscanini's letter of resignation, David Sarnoff wrote: "For the last seventeen years radio, television and the phonograph have done their best to transmit with the utmost fidelity your self-effacing, incomparable re-creations of the great music of the past and present . . . Happily, these instruments have recorded and preserved for us, and for posterity, the great music you have interpreted so faithfully and magnificently."

Actually, Toscanini's first performances with the NBC Symphony on Christmas night 1937 went out over the air with the unnatural sound of the orchestra in NBC's acoustically dead Studio 8H—sound that was unresonantly dry, flat, hard, and made airlessly tight by the audience which filled the studio. And the broadcasts continued to go out with this sound (of which an example was preserved by the Victor recording, M-745, of the 1939 broadcast of Beethoven's *Eroica*) until the season of 1941-42. Then a shell was installed which changed the unfilled studio from

acoustically dead to harshly reverberant; but with an audience present the sound was still flat and tight, and still very different from the spacious, luminous, warm sound which the orchestra exhibited at an occasional benefit concert in Carnegie Hall.

The sound in Studio 8H filled with an audience couldn't be good; but an engineer named Johnston found the one location for the microphone that produced the best the studio was capable of. In 1947 his successor, attempting to do better, tried other locations and combinations of microphones that produced worse—the shallower sound and lessened clarity of texture that were strikingly evident on an occasion when I heard NBC recordings of these broadcasts compared with recordings from the Johnston period.

For thirteen years, then, Toscanini's performances were sent out over the air with the unnatural sound they had in Studio 8H; then in the fall of 1950 the broadcasts were transferred to Carnegie Hall. Here CBS engineers had worked out a microphone pickup for the New York Philharmonic which placed the orchestra at a sufficient distance from the listener's ear for the sound to be heard properly spaced out and balanced and beautiful. But although the over-all sound of the NBC Symphony came over the air from Carnegie Hall with a naturalness and warmth it hadn't had in 8H, the NBC pickups placed the listener's ear close to the orchestra, where the sound crowded in on him, violins got to be strident, solo woodwinds were louder than tutti, and other balances so laboriously worked out by Toscanini were similarly destroyed.

Inevitably the question arises: what did Toscanini think and say about the sound of the orchestra in Studio 8H? The only reliable report I ever had about this was that standing close to the orchestra he liked hearing every instrument so clearly. Probably he was less aware than the audience of the unresonant dryness of the entire sound; but if he did remark on this he probably was told that this sound in the studio was what was needed to produce the right sound out of the listener's radio—to which the answer was that the right sound of the New York Philharmonic that came out of the radio was the natural and beautiful sound of this orchestra in Carnegie Hall, whereas the unnatural sound of the NBC Symphony in Studio 8H came out of the radio unresonantly dry and flat.

Which brings us to the question: what did Toscanini think and say about this dry and flat sound produced by the NBC recordings of the broadcasts that he listened to afterward? I never heard him comment on it; but I did hear his comments on other recordings, and I would guess that he felt about the ones of the NBC broadcasts as he did about those others: if he heard every instrument he should hear, played as it should be played, he was satisfied; and dryness or harshness of string sound apparently didn't trouble him when it came out of a loud-speaker. My guess, in other words, is that this was one of the instances in which Toscanini justified his own deprecation of his ear for recorded sound—one of those in which he exhibited the peculiarities and the inconsistencies of his attitudes, perceptions and responses in this matter. And instead of

waiting I will mention at this point the most striking instance.

Listening in the spring of 1955 to the recording of Debussy's *Ibéria* (LM-1833) I was startled at No. 48 in the second movement when the sound that had been marvelously bright and clear suddenly became less bright, less clear and less spacious. When I spoke of this to the man at RCA Victor who had had charge of the recording, and to Walter Toscanini who handled his father's communications with Victor in these matters, each acted as though it was news to him; but some months later I encountered in a review by Roland Gelatt in *High Fidelity Record Annual* 1955 and in Marsh's book similar statements—which seemingly represented information from Victor—that Toscanini had approved release of the recording only after a passage in the second movement had been replaced by a splice-in of the same passage taken from a broadcast in 1938 (Gelatt found the splice-in “undetectable to my ear” and Marsh said it “cannot be heard”). The reason for Toscanini's insistence on the splice-in was, I would guess, its slightly more plastic treatment of the music; and for this slight difference he ignored the striking inferiority in recorded sound. Not only that, but in 1947 he hadn't been content to have the timpani clearly audible in the recording of Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, but had insisted on dubbing in more of their sound to make them audible in exactly the right degree, even at a cost in lessened beauty of the rest of the sound; whereas now with the *Ibéria* recording he insisted on a splice-in in which the sustained F-sharp of the basses couldn't be heard at all.

This way of dealing with recorded sound was part of an inadequacy in dealing with recording in all its phases. His scratched records and damaged styli were evidence of his awkwardness with the end products; the failure to record the great Philharmonic performances between 1930 and 1936 resulted from his dislike of the procedures of recording. Thus, it was reported, he disliked having to begin to conduct a "take" of a side in obedience to the engineer's signal; and for the 1936 sessions, therefore, it was arranged that the turntable and cutting head would be set in operation and he would begin to conduct the "take" when he felt ready—this being the reason for the silent grooves at the beginning of some of the sides. However at the 1942 session in Philadelphia that I attended he no longer objected to beginning a "take" of a side when the red light flashed on.

One consequence of this out-of-phase relation with recording was that the Victor people had to operate at recording sessions with little or no help from Toscanini. Another was that Toscanini didn't accept on records what he accepted at concerts. I described earlier how he recorded the first movement of Debussy's *Ibéria* as he had played it repeatedly on the 1950 tour but vehemently rejected the performance as too slow when he heard the playback; I mentioned also his rejection of a side of the Philadelphia Orchestra recording of Debussy's *La Mer* because a woodwind couldn't be heard at one point: in these incidents he exhibited his unwillingness to accept and to let the public hear in a recorded performance the unsatisfactory details of tempo, dynamics and balance that he had to accept and let the audience hear at a concert. And because he

insisted on having in his recorded performances the complete freedom from imperfection that he rarely achieved at concerts, we lost recordings of beautiful performances—like the Philadelphia *La Mer* and Schubert C-major—merely because at one point an oboe wasn't exactly as strong as it should be or a wind chord wasn't perfectly balanced. I am speaking of his general practice: his occasional inconsistency in this matter was illustrated by his insistence on the *Ibéria* splice-in in which the sustained F-sharp of the basses couldn't be heard, and by his acceptance of a number of 1941 recordings in which the treble that gave brightness and luster to the upper range of sound was not balanced by the bass that would have given sufficient power and solidity to the lower range.

And another consequence was that intent on accuracy and balance of dynamics, Toscanini missed or ignored dryness, flatness, coarseness and other such defects in the sound. Victor could issue only what he approved; and it had his approval of the poor-sounding recordings it issued.

The first and most notorious of these were the ones of Haydn's Symphony No. 88, Mozart's G-minor, Beethoven's Fifth and *Eroica* made in Studio 8H before the installation of the shell. It has been an astonishing experience for me to hear what they sound like played with the best reproducing equipment of today: completely unresonant, dry and tight, but accurate in timbre, clean and not unpleasant; and that is true even of the *Eroica*, which is the poorest because the studio was filled with an audience. But played with even the best equipment of the late thirties and the

forties they were harsh and unpleasant; and on less than the best equipment *Nation* readers reported finding the *Eroica* unlistenable.

These first recordings contributed to making '8H' a dirty word among music-lovers; but the fact is that some of the better Toscanini recordings—for example the marvelously beautiful *Ibéria*—also were made in Studio 8H. At one session there in 1945 Toscanini recorded Sousa's *The Stars and Stripes Forever*, which came out with its tuttis coarse, their texture not cleanly defined in quiet, and lacking depth and spaciousness; and at the same session he recorded Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, which came out insufficiently bright but warm, spacious, clear and clean. For the Gershwin piece the principal microphone was placed at Johnston's optimum position, with a fill-in on each side, and the chairs in the studio were pushed back to increase the resonance; the Sousa recording, on the other hand, was the product of a multiple-microphone pickup which had one principal microphone on each side in front of the orchestra and one in the rear of the studio—which is to say, none at Johnston's optimum position. For the *Ibéria*, in 1950, the microphone was at the Johnston position and the chairs were pushed back; for the *La Mer* the day before, the microphone was a few feet back of the Johnston position and the chairs were only partly pushed back—the result being the lessened sharpness of presence and impact of the sound as compared with that of the *Ibéria*. However, the different sound of the Mozart G-minor and Schubert *Unfinished*, even with the microphone in optimum position, demonstrated that microphone-placement was not the only

factor, and that another was the turning of knobs in the control room.

Nor were all the poor recordings made in Studio 8H. In Carnegie Hall, Victor produced in 1940 the fine-sounding Brahms Piano Concerto No. 2 and *Immolation Scene* from *Die Götterdämmerung*, but in 1941 a Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 1 that was thin, shallow, harsh and noisily clouded with reverberation; as late as 1949 it produced the dry, compressed and otherwise poor Beethoven *Eroica* of LM-1042, as late as 1952 a Beethoven Ninth without the spaciousness and luster of the Beethoven *Pastoral* a few months earlier. As for the causes of good and bad, Carnegie Hall too had an optimum position for the microphone, which, on one of the occasions when Victor used it, produced the superb sound of the 1953 Respighi *Pines of Rome*; but for the 1947 Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* the microphone was placed further back and higher and draperies were placed over the side boxes and the parquet, the result being the lower volume level and lack of spaciousness and luster of this recording. For the more lightly scored Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream* music the microphone was placed even further back and higher, making the sound even weaker and dimmer. And I recall watching one of the two microphones behind Toscanini being raised very high at one of the sessions for the 1953 Beethoven *Missa Solemnis*—which may have contributed to the insufficient weight and prominence of orchestra and soloists as against chorus in the recording; though this result may have been achieved also by the twisting of knobs in the control room that balanced what was picked up by the

microphones behind Toscanini and the one in front of the chorus. Only such twisting of knobs controlling the balance of treble and bass could have produced the 1941 *Lohengrin* and *Traviata* Preludes, Brahms First Symphony, and *Rhine Journey* from *Die Götterdämmerung* that were lustrous on top but—for lack of sufficient bass—without depth and solidity down below.

Nor, for that matter, were all the bad recordings made in 8H and Carnegie Hall. In 1946–47 Victor had Toscanini record Mozart's *Haffner* and Haydn's *Clock* Symphonies with a reduced orchestra in NBC's Studio 3A, whose acoustical deadness and smaller size produced two of the most atrocious Toscanini recordings ever issued, with harsh tuttis and the acoustical deadness that struck the ear a blow at the end of a loud chord.

I have been discussing the recordings as they were made originally, and pointing out that a number had preserved Toscanini's performances with less than the "utmost fidelity" Sarnoff spoke of. But by the time he spoke a number were changed from what they had been originally. In the days before recording on tape, what was engraved on the wax or acetate couldn't be changed: when Toscanini, in 1947, insisted on the timpani being strengthened at one point in the 78-rpm Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet*, the only way to do this was to record on a new side the sound from the original side together with additional live timpani sound at that point—a transfer which would cost the original sound some of its bloom. But there was no such loss when sound was transferred from tape; and in a tape record-

ing, therefore, changes—like the stepping up or cutting down of the treble or bass end—could be, and regularly were, made while the recording was being transferred from the original tape to the disc master from which the stampers for the final disc records were processed, or from the original tape to a tape master which preserved the changes and became the source of the disc master. In a tape recording of the *Romeo and Juliet*, then, the timpani could have been strengthened very easily and with no loss to the rest of the sound—either by merely stepping up the bass end, or if necessary by introducing the additional live timpani sound—during the transfer from tape to disc master; but in addition it would have been possible to substitute a section of the tape of another “take” in which the timpani were sufficiently strong; and changes were in fact made in these ways in the tape recordings of Toscanini’s performances (the splicing together of parts of continuous performances has been objected to as producing a synthetic performance which is a musical falsehood; but it seems to me musically preferable to the old synthetic assemblage of unrelated four-and-a-half-minute sides which was “false” in the same way). The superb recorded performance of the *Tristan* Prelude that I heard at Toscanini’s home in September 1942 was not issued because the recording hadn’t caught the last quiet plucked G of the basses; but in a tape recording the G would have been spliced in and the recording saved.

Not only could a new recording be modified on tape, but it was possible to go back later to the original tape of an already issued recording and make new tape and disc masters incorporating changes in the sound; and Victor

did in fact issue new "enhanced" versions of Toscanini recordings under the old record numbers, with nothing to identify them but new stamper numbers after the serial numbers on the vinylite (stamper numbers like 5s or 12s after numbers like E2RP-1234). Moreover, by first transferring it from the disc to a tape it was possible now to modify even the sound that had originally been recorded on wax or acetate; and "enhanced" versions were in fact issued of Toscanini 78-rpm recordings that had been transferred by means of tape to LP. Finally, in addition to the changes that improved the sound—changes which used the new RIAA recording curve, better cutting heads for less distortion, variable groove-width for full dynamic range—some were possible that made the sound worse; and the "enhancement" with echo-chamber resonance, peaking of treble, and cutting down of bass did in fact damage a number of Toscanini recordings, making the defective ones even worse and spoiling the ones that were beautiful and in no need of improvement.

To add echo-chamber resonance to the unresonantly dry and flat sound from Studio 8H filled with an audience might seem a reasonable and necessary thing to do; but when it was done to the *Otello* it gave us the solo voices trailing fake reverberation in endless empty halls, and those voices not only inflated with a brash resonance which alters timbre but afflicted at times with an edge of buzzing distortion. Similarly it might seem reasonable to add brightness and echo-chamber resonance to the unresonantly dry and compressed sound of the Beethoven *Eroica* issued in 1950 on LM-1042; and when, in the spring of 1953, I heard

the new version that was issued in the limited edition (LM-6900) of Beethoven's nine symphonies, the more agreeable sound seemed better. But in the spring of 1955 I had occasion to listen to all the "enhanced" versions of Toscanini recordings; and this time when I compared the *Eroica* issued in 1953 with the one issued in 1950 I realized that what was unresonantly dry in the 1950 version was the true sound of violins, which in the 1953 version was made false by the electronic silkiness and gloss from the echo-chamber resonance, and that the notes of low strings, the forceful chords, the drumbeats that in the 1950 version were cleanly defined, compact, solid, were less so in the 1953 version. By 1955, moreover, Victor had substituted a further "enhanced" version for the original on LM-1042; and I found that in this one the larger amount of echo-chamber resonance changed the violin sound into a liquid stream of electronic gloss, and produced a similar liquefying and blurring all the way down, dissolving the solidity and clean definition of chords, drumbeats and bass notes into a mush of heavy rumble. In addition, with bass cut down and treble peaked the sound was brighter but shallower, and the timbres of some of the instruments were altered: the horn sounded more like a trumpet; the trumpet's sound was sharpened, and sometimes spread or split; the change from dark to light and from dry to glossy made the cellos unrecognizable; the gloss similarly falsified the sound of the clarinet, the bassoon.

Thus, even when the sound was defective the echo-chamber resonance and peaking of treble made it even worse. This was true of the LP dubbings of the lusterless

78-rpm Tchaikovsky *Pathétique* and dim Mendelssohn *Midsummer Night's Dream*; it was true even of the LP dubbings of the atrocious Studio 3A Mozart *Haffner* and Haydn *Clock*: in every instance the original sound was preferable despite its defects.

But the damaging "enhancement" was not inflicted only on defective recordings that invited attempts to improve them. It was inflicted also on LP dubbings of 78-rpm recordings that were sufficiently bright and clear—the Mozart *Jupiter*, Beethoven *Leonore* No. 3 and *Consecration of the House* Overtures, Rossini Overtures, Berlioz *Romeo and Juliet* excerpts (except *Great Festivity at the Capulets*'), Tchaikovsky *Romeo and Juliet*. And it was inflicted on some of the tape recordings that were beautiful reproductions of Toscanini's performances. Though the Debussy *La Mer* had less sharpness of "presence" and impact than the *Ibéria*, it offered nevertheless a breathtaking reproduction of the tonal subtleties and splendors that I had heard in 8H on June 1, 1950, and therefore provided no justification for the electronic tampering that produced the falsifications and the blowzily confused "brilliance" of the first "enhanced" version issued on a later LM-1221, or the even worse falsifications and confusions of the further "enhanced" version issued on LM-1833. Nor did the superb *William Tell* Overture on LRY-9000 and LM-1986 need the brightness and gloss that were added on LRM-7054. And there was no justification for the varying amounts of damage inflicted on other good recordings: the Beethoven *Pastoral* and *Septet*, the Brahms Fourth and Brahms-Haydn

Variations, the Wagner *Lohengrin* Prelude, *Parsifal* excerpts and Prelude to Act 3 of *Die Meistersinger*, the Tchaikovsky *Manfred*, Smetana *Die Moldau*, Strauss *Don Juan*.

Moreover, the "enhancement" was inflicted not only on old recordings but on new ones issued the first time. The sessions for the "pop" numbers that Toscanini recorded in the summer of 1952 were two occasions when the microphones were placed effectively for Carnegie Hall; and the result was the marvelously beautiful sound—warm, lustrous, spacious, solid, cleanly defined in quiet—of the *Dance of the Hours* first issued on LRM-7005, the slow introduction of the *Mignon* Overture first issued on LRM-7013; nevertheless it was this sound that was made thin and shallow in the Allegro part of the *Mignon* Overture, and given a shallow, blowzy "brilliance" in the *Carmen* Suite on the reverse side of 7013. Similarly Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* was first issued on LM-1838 with the magnificent sound of the original tape (which I happened to hear) distorted and falsified by excessive peaking of treble that produced the ear-piercing trumpet sound at the beginning, the snarling sound of the brass in *Catacombs*, the harsh, raucous sound of the full orchestra elsewhere. And it must be added that the *Dance of the Hours* that escaped "enhancement" on LRM-7005 came off the later LM-1834, *Toscanini Plays Your Favorites*, with cellos made bright and glossy, bass less solid, plucked bass notes softened and spread like bass-drum beats.

There is no doubt about Toscanini's having heard and approved the recordings that were issued with "enhancement" right from the start, like the *Musorgsky Pictures* on LM-1838, the *Carmen* Suite on LRM-7013: Victor had to have his approval of a new recording. And concerning the *Musorgsky Pictures* I was told at Victor that he had rejected the original unedited tape of the recording; that a letter from Walter Toscanini had transmitted his father's criticisms and requests of changes; and that Toscanini had approved the edited tape with the "enhancing" changes made by the Victor engineer who was then working for Walter Toscanini and was the originator of most of the "enhanced" versions of the recordings.

I don't know whether Victor had to have Toscanini's approval of new "enhanced" versions of old recordings, and whether he heard and approved all of them. But the engineer involved insisted to a friend of mine that Toscanini approved the "enhanced" *La Mer*; and I would suppose he heard some of the others.

Certain Victor engineers have contended that Toscanini didn't like "enhanced" sound, citing his rejection of an "enhanced" *Verdi Requiem* that was submitted to him. But evidently he did like the sound of other "enhanced" recordings that he accepted; and this appears to be yet another matter in which he was inconsistent.

Part of the responsibility for the damage to the recordings, then, was Toscanini's. And one can say, I think, that part of the responsibility was the reviewers'. If they had objected, Victor might have retreated; instead, Victor was encouraged to proceed by the approval and even the en-

thusiastic praise, exemplified by the review in *High Fidelity* which found that the "enhancement" of the Debussy *La Mer* gave the Studio 8H recording "the atmosphere of a concert hall," which was "a real improvement," but added that electronic trickery couldn't give this recording or the *Ibéria* on the reverse side the "clarity, brilliance and presence" of the Musorgsky *Pictures*.

In the spring of 1955 additional Toscanini recordings were in process of "being brought up to Victor standards," as the Victor executive phrased it. And it was therefore a surprise to find in the *Toscanini Omnibus* (LM-6026) issued in August 1955 the *Carmen* Suite with the "enhancement" removed. But on the other hand the record offered the *Mignon* Overture with bass restored in the Allegro but with the sound made unpleasantly sharp by an excessive boost in treble; it offered the *Don Pasquale* Overture—first issued on LRM-7028 with reverberant but true and agreeable sound—now also made unpleasantly sharp by the boost in treble; and it offered a *Forza Del Destino* Overture beefed up at both treble and bass ends.

The first hope that the damage to the recordings might be undone came when Victor, that summer, removed from work on Toscanini's recordings the engineer responsible for most of the "enhanced" versions, and assigned Richard Gardner to work with Toscanini in Riverdale on recordings to be derived from his broadcasts—i.e., from Victor's own tapes of the broadcast performances of the final season and NBC's tapes and acetate discs with the performances of earlier seasons. Gardner was one of Victor's most skillful

engineers, with a keen ear for musical sound; and in Riverdale he had working with him another excellent engineer, John H. Corbett, formerly of NBC, who had taken over the transferring from discs to tapes for Walter Toscanini's private collection. In addition Gardner was opposed to "enhancement"; and in an article in *High Fidelity* on his work with Toscanini he reported Toscanini's explanation of how the addition of artificial echo damaged the sound, and promised that henceforth the recordings would reproduce only the sound that Toscanini had heard in Studio 8H or Carnegie Hall. But the recordings couldn't reproduce the sound Toscanini had heard; they could reproduce only the sound that the microphone or microphones had picked up in the studio or hall, which was in various ways and degrees different from what he had heard. In Carnegie Hall, at the broadcast of November 10, 1951, Toscanini had heard the antique cymbals produce sounds of the required delicacy in the last section of Berlioz's *Queen Mab*; but the microphones, as placed and controlled by NBC's engineers, had picked up the excessively loud sounds of the antique cymbals that were reproduced by the recording derived from the broadcast and issued in LM-6026. And Toscanini, who wouldn't have tolerated those loud sounds in Carnegie Hall, had accepted them in the recording. More accurate, therefore, was Gardner's statement to me that henceforth we would be given sound on records exactly as Toscanini *wanted* it (my italics)—taking into account, Gardner added, the limitations of the source material and the state of the recording art—to which, judging by some

of the recordings that were issued, I think he should have added the state of Toscanini's ear for recorded sound.

Gardner also told me his assignment was to work on new recordings, not on old ones; and we got the beautiful-sounding Strauss *Don Quixote* on LM-2026 and Berlioz *Harold in Italy* on LM-1951 processed from Victor's own tapes of the broadcasts in November 1953, and the good-sounding Cherubini Requiem Mass in C minor on LM-2000 processed from NBC recordings of the broadcast in February 1950. We also got recordings processed from earlier broadcasts, in which we heard the limitations and defects of the source material, the imperfect state of recording technique, and possibly the peculiarities of Toscanini's ear for recorded sound. The thin, shallow, nasty sound of the Kodály *Háry János* Suite on LM-1973 processed from the 1947 broadcast may have represented only the poor quality of the source material. But in the Mozart Symphony K.543 on LM-2001 processed from the 1948 broadcast the ear-piercing violin sound could be made normal and agreeable by drastic reduction of treble—which seemed to indicate excessive peaking of treble in the transfer from NBC disc to Victor tape; and the record reproduced the third and fourth movements with a gritty distortion and stridency that I was able to ascertain was not in the sound produced by the tape master—which indicated something badly done somewhere between that tape and my record.

But with the new recordings we did after all get a number of new versions of old ones. In some of these—the Beethoven symphonies reissued in LM-6901 and on the single records under the old numbers; the Beethoven *Leonore*

No. 3 Overture reissued on LVT-1025; the Tchaikovsky *Manfred* reissued on LVT-1024; the Rossini Overtures to *The Barber of Seville*, *La Cenerentola*, *Il Signor Bruschino* and *La Gazza Ladra* reissued on LM-2040—the “enhancement” was reduced (presumably the state of Toscanini’s ear dictated the putting of the fake gloss on the beautiful sound of the Beethoven *Pastoral*). And in the *Forza del Destino* Overture reissued in *Verdi and Toscanini*, LM-6041, the “enhancement” was removed entirely. But the Mozart Divertimento K.287, first issued in 1950 on LM-13 with no doctoring of the sound dubbed from the excellent 78-rpm original, was now reissued on LM-2001 with a boost at both treble and bass ends—the violins over-bright and glossy, the bass heavy and soft. And in addition to the Rossini overtures I just mentioned, LM-2040 offered the superb *William Tell* Overture with peaking of treble and with reduction of bass that lessened its solidity, and the *Semiramide* Overture (originally on LRM-7054) damaged even more in the same way. For the rest, the Act 2 of Gluck’s *Orfeo* reissued on LVT-1041 was less strident in the tuttis than it had been on LM-1850 but had less solidity, requiring the stepping up of bass; and the Smetana *Moldau* and Dukas *Sorcerer’s Apprentice* were reissued on *Toscanini Conducts*, LM-2056, without the “enhancement” of the later LM-1118, but with a slight tipping of the balance toward the treble end.

These were the changes I heard in the old recordings that were reissued on records with new numbers. I asked Victor whether any changed versions of other old recordings—with “enhancement” either added or removed—had been

issued under their old numbers since 1955; and the answer was that there had been no changes in *any* of the old recordings except the Beethoven symphonies. I am sure I heard the changes I have reported in the few recordings I have mentioned; as for the other recordings that I found damaged by "enhancement" in 1955, Victor's statement would leave them still damaged today. And at the moment I know nothing which encourages the hope that the damage will be undone.

DISCOGRAPHY

I had intended to give first a chronological list of the dates of the recordings—an additional reason for this being the discovery that a number of the dates given in Marsh's *Toscanini and the Art of Orchestral Performance* are incorrect. * However I was unable to obtain from Victor the material of this kind that I must presume it made available to Marsh (I presume this—though Victor said it knew nothing about any such material having been made available to him, or about Marsh himself, and had no correspondence with him in its files—because I have the letter he wrote me in 1954 about his getting the material from Victor, and the copy he sent me of some of the material he got, and because he published his thanks to Victor for giving him the assistance it had promised him).

* Here are a few:

Beethoven's Overture *For the Consecration of the House* was recorded not on November 11, 1946, several months before Toscanini performed it the first time, but on December 16, 1947, shortly

I can therefore give no detailed chronology of Toscanini's recording activities, but only a summary. He made his first recordings for Victor in 1920-21, with the orchestra of La Scala that he had brought to the United States for a tour. These were acoustical recordings; and he made his first electrical ones in 1926 for Brunswick, with the New York Philharmonic which he conducted for the first time that year. In 1929 he made a number of recordings for Victor with the New York Philharmonic-Symphony; and in 1936, at the end of his final season with this orchestra, he made another group of recordings with it for Victor. During visits to London between 1937 and 1939 he made several recordings with the BBC Symphony for His Master's Voice. From 1938 to the end of his career he recorded for Victor with the NBC Symphony. And in the season of 1941-42 he made a number of recordings with the Philadelphia Orchestra that were not issued.

What follows is an annotated list of the issued recordings arranged under the alphabetically ordered names of the composers of the music. It includes not only the recordings

after a second performance, and not in Carnegie Hall but in Studio 8H.

The excerpts from Berlioz's *Romeo and Juliet* on LM-1019 were recorded not on April 8, 1946, but on February 17, 1947, the day after a broadcast performance.

The Prelude to Act 1 of Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* in LM-6020 was not recorded on November 26, 1951, but is a dubbing of the performance recorded on March 11, 1946, and first issued on 78-rpm record 11-9385—this even though Marsh (whose ear is, he assures us, "a rather sensitive device") hears that the performance on 11-9385 is slower and more relaxed than the one in LM-6020.

DISCOGRAPHY

made at special recording sessions but those derived from NBC's recordings of its broadcasts; however it omits the V-discs, derived from broadcasts, that were made during the war for the armed forces.

All the recordings are listed; but not all are commented on. Some I never heard; some I haven't been able to hear again; some—e.g., Grofé's *Grand Canyon Suite*, Sibelius's *Finlandia*, Brahms's First Symphony—nothing could induce me to hear again. I don't own the "enhanced" versions I listened to in the spring of 1955, which I borrowed for the purpose; and concerning these, therefore, I report my 1955 findings. Concerning all others I report what I have heard listening to the recordings again now; and I have listened to them again because of my discovery that what I reported about certain recordings five—or even two—years ago described what they sounded like played on the equipment I had then, but not what they sound like played on the equipment I have now. (In 1952, for example, I reported that the Brahms Fourth needed stepping up of bass, which it did with my RCA LC1A speaker of that period, but does not with my present speakers.) From this I concluded that writing today I would have to report what I heard now when I played the recordings on my present equipment: Electro-Sonic C-1 and C-3 cartridges, a Bogen PR-100-A preamplifier, * a McIntosh 60-watt amplifier, and a speaker system comprising two Janszen electrostatic high-frequency speakers over two Janszen dynamic low-frequency speakers

* I used this Bogen preamplifier only for its treble cutoffs, and came to see that for other reasons I would have done better to use the Marantz, which also has such cutoffs.

placed side by side. And since I report my 1955 findings about the "enhanced" versions, I list the equipment on which I played them at that time: a Fairchild 220-A cartridge, a McIntosh C-8 preamplifier, a Brook 30-watt amplifier, and an RCA LC1A speaker.

The numbers I give of the records—all Victor, with a few specified exceptions—are mostly those on my copies or in Victor catalogues; and the other numbers obtained from the *Gramophone Shop Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* or the Clough and Cuming *World's Encyclopedia of Recorded Music* are in parentheses (this because of the discovery of an error in the number of Beethoven's *Prometheus Overture* in the *World's Encyclopedia*). The numbers of La Scala Orchestra recordings in parentheses I obtained from a dependable private source. And when the year I give for a recording is in parentheses it is one I obtained from this source.

A number like 3s or 12s is the one stamped on the vinylite after a number like E3RP-6789 to identify the stamper from which the particular copy of the record side was pressed.

When playing a record I started with the knobs for bass turn-over and treble roll-off set as they were supposed to be for the particular recording, with treble and bass knobs set for flat response, and with the range not limited by a cutoff; then I made whatever changes the sound from the record required—e.g., a treble roll-off of 12 db with a 78-rpm recording instead of the prescribed 8 or 0, because less than 12 added either nothing to the sound or too little in com-

DISCOGRAPHY: BACH

parison with the added noise; or an 8-kc cutoff for a similar reason; or turning down of the treble knob from flat position to cancel a peaking of treble that made the violins ear-piercing.

BACH

Air from Suite No. 3 (known as Air for G String)

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9344 in M-1080;
11-9345 in DM-1080.

The performance is a beautiful example of the Toscanini articulation and shaping of melody. With bass turn-over at 500 and treble roll-off at 12 the recorded sound is excellent.

BARBER

Adagio for Strings

(1942.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-8287).

BEETHOVEN

CONCERTOS

No. 1 in C for Piano

(1945.) NBC Symphony with Ania Dorfmann. 78
rpm: M-1036. LP transfer: LM-1039.

Toscanini creates a wonderfully enlivened orchestral context for playing by Dorfmann that is as characterless in the slow movement as in the fast ones in which his tempos make it impossible for a pianist to do much more than get

in all the notes. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, and with an 8-kc cutoff, the sound from M-1036 is spacious and warm; but the violins are not lustrous in the tuttis. I haven't heard LM-1039.

No. 3 in C minor for Piano

1944. NBC Symphony with Artur Rubinstein (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of October 29, 1944). 78 rpm: M-1016. LP transfer: LCT-1009.

The power of the orchestral performance doesn't stimulate Rubinstein to play with anything but his usual on-the-surface brilliance and elegance. The violin sound from M-1016, with treble roll-off at 12, is sharp and is improved by reduction of treble; and woodwinds and piano waver in pitch. I haven't heard LCT-1009.

Concerto in D for Violin

- (1940.) NBC Symphony with Jascha Heifetz. 78 rpm: M-705. LP transfer: LCT-1010.

When M-705 was issued I reported the musical inadequacy of Heifetz's phrasing, which was "either silken and suave or swooning and mincing," and the "wooden sound of Toscanini's recent recording in Studio 8H"; and I haven't heard the recording since then.

Fidelio

1944. NBC Symphony with Rose Bampton, Eleanor Steber, Jan Peerce, Herbert Janssen, Sidor Belar-sky and others, and chorus directed by Peter

Willhousky (derived principally from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of December 10 and 17, 1944). LP: LM-6025.

1944. "*Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?*" Bampton and NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9110. LP transfer: in LM-6025.

The performance suffers from Bampton's monotonously shrill Leonore, Janssen's rough-voiced Pizzaro, and Belarsky's bad pronunciation of German in the part of Rocco; but it has the excellent singing of Steber as Marzelline and Pearce as Florestan and the playing of the NBC Symphony in the progression paced and shaped by Toscanini.

LM-6025 is a transfer from (1) the acetate discs with the NBC recordings of the broadcasts, (2) Victor 11-9110 with the recording of "*Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?*" made shortly after the broadcasts, and (3) Victor SP-2 with the 1945 recording of the *Leonore* No. 3 Overture. In the sound from my 1S-1S-3S-7S copy, artificial resonance is added to all the transferred material, with various results. Using a Fairchild 225 cartridge in this instance I find that the Studio 8H sound remains flat and compressed, and not warm and lustrous, but agreeable, in the *Fidelio* Overture; that it is dull in the final scene; that in the other scenes it is more resonantly live and full, and though the voices trail fake resonance in endless empty halls, their timbre is accurate. On the other hand, orchestra and voice are altered in the transfer of the "*Abscheulicher!*" recording; and in the *Leonore* No. 3 the sound is more resonant and bright, violins are glossier, and bass notes are softened, diffused

and rumbling. Moreover, the sound from the NBC acetates is beefed up at both ends, causing me to set bass turn-over at 250. Also, crowding the performance onto two discs has this result—that near the center of the record the sound is enveloped in an increasing hash of high-frequency distortion (there is less with the compliant Electro-Sonic cartridge, and with an 8-kc cutoff). And the dungeon scene drops in volume near the center of the record.

The original 78-rpm 11-9110 reproduces "*Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?*" with good sound which on side 2 drops in volume, moving the performance back to where it has less body and impact.

Missa Solemnis

1953. NBC Symphony with Lois Marshall, Nan Merriman, Eugene Conley, Jerome Hines and the Robert Shaw Chorale. LP: LM-6013.

This is one of the instances in which there have, in the course of years, been changes in what has nevertheless remained essentially the same beautifully fashioned and incomparably effective performance. There was a version of it in 1940 with more relaxed tempos and more distinguished solo singing, which was reproduced better by the private recording made in Carnegie Hall; and anyone who knows it must regret that it wasn't issued to the public. But those who don't know it will think there could be nothing more beautiful and effective than the version issued in LM-6013. In Toscanini's performance of the choral finale of the Ninth Symphony, one thing to marvel at is the unfailing sense for continuity and coherence

that finds tempos which integrate the many sections into a progression from one dazzling sublimity to the next; and the similar achievement in the *Missa* is even more remarkable and impressive because of its enormously greater scale. In fact, in the longer stretches of the *Missa* the sustained intensity of these sublimities is almost unbearable; and one of the remarkable achievements of Toscanini's performance is to make it bearable. Nor is it only the dazzling sublimities: there is also his realization of some of the quiet pages of the work that are for me the most wonderful of all—the mystically introspective opening sections of the *Sanctus* and the *Benedictus*, the radiant Allegretto section of the *Agnus Dei*.

The balance of soloists, chorus and orchestra that Toscanini created in Carnegie Hall is destroyed by the recording, which makes the chorus predominate over soloists and orchestra. Otherwise the sound from a 5S-12S-11S-8S copy of the recording, with RIAA equalization, is good; but I suggest turning the treble knob down a little from flat position.

OVERTURES

For the Consecration of the House

(1947.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 12-0757B/58 in M-1287; 12-0759B/61B in DM-1287. LP transfers: LM-6 and LM-9022.

Played with bass turn-over at 800 and treble at 12, M-1287 reproduces the wonderfully integrating performance with sound that is full, solid, clear and bright. I don't have

the original transfer on LM-6; but in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" sound from LM-9022 was shallow, blurred, and—in the latter part of the fugue—strident and increasingly enveloped in high-frequency distortion, to the point of being unlistenable.

Coriolan

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9023.

With bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12 the record reproduces the magnificently powerful performance with sound that is full and solid but not spacious and lustrous.

Egmont

1939. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of November 18, 1939). 78 rpm: HMV DB-5705.

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1834.

The 1939 recording, like the 1939 recordings of the *Leonore* Nos. 2 and 3, was issued only by HMV. The later performance is a superb one in Toscanini's later style; but the earlier performance—with its slower, more massive, more tremendous introductory proclamations, its slower Allegro and more expansive coda—is one of Toscanini's greatest.

DB-5705, played with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12 and with a 6-kc cutoff, gives the unresonant, dry, flat sound of Studio 8H with an audience; a 15 side of LM-1834, with RIAA equalization, gives sound that is full and clear but not spacious and lustrous.

Leonore No. 1

(1939.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 15945. LP transfer:
LCT-1041.

The performance is one of Toscanini's finest. I find that 15945 produces heavy bass which needs bass turn-over at 250; and with treble roll-off at 12 the sound is clear and bright. A 2s copy of the first-issued LCT-1041, played with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, gives sound that is full but needs to be brightened by turning the treble knob up a little from flat position. In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a later LCT-1041 (5s and higher) gave sound with only moderate loss of solidity and of clear definition down below, for greater brightness up above.

Leonore No. 2

1939. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of November 25, 1939). 78rpm: HMV (DA-1753/4).

The performance has the tremendous expansiveness and power exhibited by other performances in the 1939 Beethoven cycle—the *Eroica* Symphony, the *Egmont*, *Fidelio*, and other *Leonore* Overtures—and is one of Toscanini's greatest. I was unable to hear the HMV 10-inch dubbing from the original recordings.

Leonore No. 3

1939. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of November 4, 1939). 78 rpm: HMV DB-5703/4.

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(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: SP₂ and (M-1098).
LP transfers: LM-1043, LRM-7023, LM-6025
and LVT-1025.

The tremendous 1939 performance is more expansive than the later one, with a retardation in the last few measures of the introduction which the later one doesn't make, and with slower tempos in the passages after the trumpet calls. It also attains hair-raising power at certain points, with expansions of tutti sonority in which the eruptions of the kettledrums are overemphasized by the recording. The HMV dubbing makes the original Studio 8H sound even less full and deep—which is to say, even shallower, flatter and harder; and the kettledrum in particular sounds almost as though wood were being struck on wood. Whatever brightness the dubbed sound may have retained had been removed from the HMV records I heard by playing with the heavy pickups of the early forties.

Without the retardation, the end of the introduction in the later performance is too fast; but except for this the performance is a superb one in its own style.

In 1955 I found that the sound from LRM-7023, with an "enhanced" version of the LP dubbing of the 1945 recording, was tipped toward the treble end, which made it brighter, shallower, less clean; and was enveloped in high-frequency distortion near the center of the record; and that the sound from the "enhanced" version on a later LM-1043 (15s and higher) had gloss from the added resonance and was unbearable from high-frequency distortion in the last tuttis. In 1956 I found that the sound from LVT-1025,

which replaced LM-1043, was damaged less by the "enhancement" and was listenable. I find now that the original 78-rpm SP-2, played with bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12 and with an 8-kc cutoff, gives sound that is tipped toward the bass end, with violins not bright; that a 1s side of the first-issued LM-1043, with turn-over at RIAA and roll-off at 12, gives sound with the same poor balance and even duller violins; and that the "enhanced" version in LM-6025, with RIAA equalization, makes the violins brighter and glossier, but bass notes are softened, diffused and rumbling.

I was told that Toscanini approved all three *Leonore* Overtures of the 1939 Beethoven cycle at the time for release here—which would make it possible for Victor to issue them on LP now.

Prometheus

(1944.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9005B in SP-2 and (11-9449 in M-1098). LP transfer: LCT-1041.

This is another superb performance. I find that SP-2, played with bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12, gives unusually solid and spacious sound, with violins not lustrous; and that a 2s side of the first-issued LCT-1041, with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, gives sound that is full and clear. In 1955 I found only moderate loss of solidity and of clear definition down below for greater brightness up above in the sound from the "enhanced" version on a later LCT-1041 (5s and higher).

Quartet Op. 135: Lento and Vivace

(1938.) Strings of the NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-590
LP transfer: LCT-1041.

I have heard no more powerfully eloquent performance of the compressed fragments of the middle section of the Lento. M-590, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, reproduces the small string sonorities agreeably; but a 2s side of the first-issued LCT-1041, played with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, gives very dull violin sound, with very disturbing high-frequency distortion.

Septet

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1745.

The piece, a favorite of Toscanini's is made engaging by the animation and phrasing of his small-scaled performance with an increased number of strings to balance the three winds. A 2s side of the first-issued LM-1745, played with RIAA equalization, gives excellent sound; nevertheless in 1955 a 14s pressing betrayed "enhancement" in the slight electronic gloss and the lessened solidity. And someone at Victor saw fit to improve the performance itself by inserting a measure's pause that Toscanini didn't make before the development in the first movement.

SYMPHONIES

Note: Toscanini's last recordings of the symphonies with the NBC Symphony were issued as follows: first, No. 3 (*Eroica*) on LM-1042, then Nos. 1 and 9 in LM-6009,

then all nine—including the first “enhanced” version of the *Eroica*—in the de luxe limited edition, LM-6900, then successive changed and “enhanced” versions of Nos. 2 to 8 on single records LM-1723, 1755, 1756 and 1757, then the revised versions made by Richard Gardner under Toscanini’s supervision in LM-6901 and on the single records. I heard this succession of changed versions on equipment in which there was a succession of changes; and this accounts for most of the differences between my findings then and now. Thus, I reported in 1956 that Gardner’s revised versions of Nos. 1, 7 and 9 in LM-6901 were free of the electronic gloss on some of the others, and was astonished and perplexed now to hear the slight gloss on parts of Nos. 1, 7 and 9. And I can account for this only by the fact that in 1956 I was using one Janszen high-frequency speaker with two Bozak low-frequency speakers, whereas now I am using two Janszen high-frequency speakers with more efficient low-frequency speakers, and the treble range has more bloom and glow and presence. In other words, the gloss, which is slight, is now more audible. But different equipment does not account for the contradiction between my 1952 finding of fuller sonority in the Scherzo of Beethoven’s Ninth when it returned after the Trio, and my present finding of a little less fullness in the Scherzo when it returns. And I was at a loss about this until a friend recalled that in 1952 we had been struck right at the beginning of the Scherzo by the shallow and inadequate recorded sound of the *fortissimo* kettledrum figure, and that at the return of the Scherzo we had been struck by the

right fullness and solidity this time in the kettledrum sound. Apparently—and I offer this not to excuse but only to explain—this fullness in the sound of the introductory kettledrum figure became in my mind a fullness in the sound of the Scherzo.

No. 1 in C

(1921.) Finale. La Scala Orchestra. 74690 and (6300).

(1937.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-507. LP transfer: LCT-1023.

1951. NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6009, LM-6900 and LM-6901.

It is surprising to hear in the 1937 performance the raggedness of the opening chords of the introduction that are executed precisely in the 1951 performance. Otherwise the two performances differ only very slightly in the first three movements: the Allegro con brio of the first movement and the Andante cantabile con moto of the second are slightly faster, the Allegro molto e vivace of the third movement, surprisingly, slightly slower, in 1951, but with the essential lightness and grace of the performance unchanged. As for the finale, it is interesting to note that in 1921 Toscanini plays the fourth little upward scale-passage of the slow introduction—with its crescendo to D and its unexpected drop to *p* on E—in strict time; that in 1937 he underlines the surprise by means of a hairsbreadth's delay before the E; and that in 1951 he returns to strict time. Also, in 1937 he plays the subsequent Allegro molto e vivace in exactly the same tempo as in 1921, and with what appears

to be the same lightness and grace; but in 1951 he plays it a hairsbreadth faster and more energetically.

I find that M-501 produces heavy bass that needs bass turn-over at 400; and with treble roll-off at 12 the violins are clear but need stepping up of treble for adequate brightness and luster. In 1952 I reported that LCT-1023 gave bright and clear sound only in the first movement; and I haven't heard it since then.

I find also that a 1s side in the first-issued LM-6009, played with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives very good sound with lustrous, true-sounding violins, which a 27s pressing in LM-6901, played with RIAA equalization, makes a little brighter and silkier in the second, third and fourth movements.

No. 2 in D

1949 (second and fourth movements) and 1951 (first and third movements). NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1723 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901

In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on LM-1723 (5s and higher) gave natural sound in the first two movements and blurred sound—e.g., drumbeats reduced to a blurred rumble—in the other two. I find now that a 3s side of the first-issued LM-1723, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, produces good sound with dry-sounding violins in all but the second movement, in which the sound is more spacious and the violins more lustrous. And an 18s pressing in LM-6901, with RIAA equalization, makes the sound brighter and silkier.

No. 3 in E flat (*Eroica*)

- 1939. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of October 28, 1939). M-765.
- 1949. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: DM-1375. LP: LM-1042 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

The 1939 performance, one of Toscanini's greatest, is in his earlier expansive style involving great elasticity of tempo; the 1949 performance is an impressive example of the power he could achieve in his later simpler style involving only slight and subtle modifications of tempo.

I find that M-765, played with the best equipment of today, produces the unresonantly dry, flat, hard, tight sound of 8H filled with an audience before the installation of the shell; but that the sound is accurate in timbre, clean and not unpleasant.

I never heard DM-1375; and I am unable to rehear the first-issued LM-1042, which in 1950 I found unresonantly dry, cold, compressed, weak in bass, and strident in tuttis. In 1955 I found that the first "enhanced" version in LM-6900 did only moderate damage to the sound; but the second "enhanced" version on a later LM-1042 (30s and 25s and higher) changed the violin sound to a stream of electronic gloss, changed solid chords, bass notes and drumbeats to a mush of heavy rumble, made the sound shallow, and altered the timbres of the instruments. I find now that 47s and 40s sides in LM-6901, requiring bass turn-over at 800 for adequate bass, reveal the use of only enough "enhancement" to give the violin sound a little resonant brightness and smoothness, with a resulting loss of a little

sharpness of definition in the drumbeats. In other words, the Gardner revision is listenable.

No. 4 in B flat

(1939.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-676.

1951. NBC Symphony (derived from the tape used for the broadcast of February 3, 1951). LP: LM-1723 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

Toscanini's *Allegro vivace* tempo is a trifle slower in 1939 than in 1951, and the earlier performance is a little more relaxed; but the superb 1951 performance is not at all tense or driving.

I find that M-676 produces heavy bass that requires bass turn-over at 250 and turning down of the bass knob; and that with treble roll-off at 12 violins are muffled and require turning up of the treble knob.

In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version of the 1951 recording on LM-1723 (10s and higher) gave streaming glossy sound in the first movement and blurred sound in the other movements, with distortion in the last two. I find now that a 5s side of the first-issued LM-1723, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, produces normally bright and lustrous violins in the second movement, but dry ones in the first and last movements, and dull ones in the third; and that slight distortion early in the finale becomes very disturbing later (also, part of measure 24 of the second movement is missing). And a 35s pressing in LM-6901, with RIAA equalization, gives sound that is at once more muffled and more glossy, with the distortion still audible in the finale despite the limited frequency-range.

No. 5 in C minor

(1920.) La Scala Orchestra. 78 rpm: (74769/70 and 6304.)

(1939.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-640. LP transfer: LCT-1041.

1952. NBC Symphony (derived from the NBC recordings of the broadcast of March 22, 1952). LP: LM-1757 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

I never heard the Scala recording. As for the other two, the performances differ only slightly in the first two movements, with the first movement, surprisingly, a little *slower*, and the second unchanged in tempo, in 1952. But in 1952 Toscanini makes slighter retardations in the opening statements of the third movement, and plays the movement in a faster tempo that is difficult for the string basses in the middle section. And even more striking is the difference in his treatment of the finale: in 1939 the hushed transition at the end of the third movement broadens out to a majestic statement of the opening of the finale in a deliberate tempo which, as it continues, becomes wearisome; whereas in 1952 the transition blazes up into an impressive statement of the opening of the finale in a buoyant Allegro tempo that is superbly effective throughout. Except for the middle section of the third movement, then, the 1952 performance is the better of the two, and a magnificent realization of the work.

I find that M-640, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives sound which is full but unresonantly dead and dry. And a 2s side of the first-issued LCT-1041,

with the same equalization settings, gives sound which is less full, but to which a little "enhancement" imparts a little resonance and silky brightness. In 1955 I found that an 11s copy of the further, but still only moderately, "enhanced" LCT-1041 gave sound which had increased brightness up above and lessened solidity and clarity of definition down below.

In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version of the 1951 recording on LM-1757 (15s and higher) gave sound with "enhancement" that was very slight in the first movement, more noticeable in the third, and very bad—producing dirty confusion up above, rumbling confusion down below—in the finale. I find now that a 9s side of the first-issued LM-1757, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives full and agreeable sound; but the plucked bass notes at the beginning of the second movement are inaudible. And a 31s pressing in LM-6901 gives sound which still needs the bass turn-over at 800 (but the plucked bass notes in the second movement still are inaudible) and in which the balance is tipped toward the treble, making the first three movements brighter but shallower and less solid, and the finale unpleasantly harsh and sharp (the treble knob should be turned down from flat position).

No. 6 in F (*Pastoral*)

(1937.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-417. LP transfer: LCT-1042.

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1755 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

DISCOGRAPHY: BEETHOVEN

Both performances are genially relaxed and spacious; but the later one gains by the increased animation of the second and third movements—the real *Andante molto mosso* flow of the brook, the merrier *Allegro* of the country people. It is, surprisingly, the earlier performance that has the hairs-breadth-faster first movement.

I find that M-417 produces a very heavy bass which needs bass turn-over at 250; and that this turn-over is needed also by the less ample sound from a 1S-1S LCT-1042.

In 1955 I found that the “enhanced” version of the 1952 recording on LM-1755 (10S and higher) produced sound that had an electronic silkiness and lacked clean definition throughout—producing, among other things, chords with lessened solidity and impact in the fourth movement’s storm. I find now that a 7S-9S pressing of the first-issued LM-1755, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives beautifully lustrous and spacious sound; and that a 22S and 15S pressing in LM-6901, played with RIAA equalization, makes this sound less beautiful with an added electronic gloss and a brightness that gets to be sharp, requiring reduction of treble. In the finale the tipping of the balance toward the treble sharpens the sound of the brass and changes the sounds of violas and cellos. The treble knob needs to be turned down from flat position.

No. 7 in A

- 1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: M-317. LP transfers: LCT-1013 and CAL-352.
- 1951. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1756 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

Toscanini was right in preferring the faster "take" of the Poco sostenuto introduction that had to be substituted in M-317 in 1942; and it is interesting to note that this faster 1936 "take" is almost identical in tempo with the Poco sostenuto of 1951. Otherwise the 1951 performance is faster—considerably so in the Vivace first movement and the Allegretto second movement; by hairsbreadths in the Presto third movement and the Allegro con brio finale. Again the earlier performance is more relaxed, but the later one is not tense and driving; and the first is a superb achievement in Toscanini's earlier expansive style, but the other is an equally impressive achievement in his later simpler style.

I find that M-317 gives sound that is a little heavy with bass turn-over at 800; and with treble roll-off at 12, violins are clear but not lustrous. As for the LP transfers, the sound from a 1s pressing of CAL-352 is louder and brighter, the sound from a 6s-6s pressing of LCT-1013 cleaner.

In 1955 I found that a 17s-15s pressing of LM-1756 with the "enhanced" version of the 1951 recording gave sound with blowzy "brilliance" up above and lessened depth, solidity, and cleanness of definition down below. I find now that a 12s-9s pressing of the first-issued LM-1756, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives in the first three movements sound that is full, solid and clear but not lustrous, and in the finale sound that is drier and less full. And 19s (18s?) and 18s sides in LM-6901, with treble roll-off at RIAA and bass turn-over at 800, give shallower sound which is otherwise unchanged in the first two

DISCOGRAPHY: BEETHOVEN

movements but is glossier in the third and brighter in the finale.

No. 8 in F

(1939.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-908.

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1757 and in LM-6900 and LM-6901.

I have not been able to re-hear M-908, concerning which my report at the time was that it reproduced a marvelous performance with good sound which was enveloped in acoustical deadness.

In 1955 I found that the sound from the "enhanced" version of the 1952 recording on LM-1757 (15s and higher) was less clearly and cleanly defined. I find now that a 2s side of the first-issued LM-1757, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives good sound in the first movement, coarser sound in the second, and brasher sound, heard in unquiet from excessive reverberation, in the third and fourth. And a 25s pressing in LM-6901, with RIAA equalization, gives brighter and sharper sound in the first movement, even sharper and veiled sound in the second, and unpleasantly harsh and dirty sound in the third and fourth, requiring the treble knob to be turned down from flat position.

No. 9 in D minor

1952. NBC Symphony with Eileen Farrell, Nan Merriman, Jan Peerce, Norman Scott and the Robert Shaw Chorale. LP: in LM-6009, LM-6900 and LM-6901.

The earlier recordings of this work that Toscanini rejected

and the one he finally approved document the changes in the performance—e.g., the faster tempo and lessened expansiveness of the first movement in December 1939 as against February 1938; its slower tempo and increased expansiveness at certain climactic points in March 1952 as against 1939. But these were minor changes of pacing and shaping in a progression that remained essentially unchanged: whether a little slower or a little faster, whether a little more expansive or a little less, the first movement had a continuity of impetus, flow and tension which built up tremendous cumulative power; a similar continuity contributed to the radiant sublimity of the third movement; and in the finale a different—but no less characteristic and wonderful—manifestation of the unfailing sense for continuity and coherence was the tempos that integrated the many sections into a single progression from one dazzling sublimity to the next.

I find that 3s (first movement), 8s (second and third movements) and 7s (finale) sides in the first-issued LM-6009 give sound which is best with RIAA equalization: full, solid, but not spacious, with violins that are clear but not lustrous. And the same sound, with the violins a little less bright, is produced by a 24s pressing of the first movement in LM-6901; but 31s and 43s pressings of the other movements, with RIAA equalization, give sound in which the balance is tipped toward the high end, and which is therefore shallower down below, with silky violins that are a little sharp and not clean in the tuttis. It is improved by bass turn-over at 800 and treble knob turned down a little from flat position. The sound of the Scherzo when it returns

after the Trio is a little less full and more shallow; but the introductory kettledrum figure has more solidity this time (however the little kettledrum joke in the *Ritmo di tre battute* section is only slightly more audible).

BERLIOZ

Harold in Italy

1953. NBC Symphony with Carlton Cooley, viola (recorded during the broadcast of November 29, 1953). LP: LM-1951.

It was the mercurial finale in a Toscanini performance around 1930 that had me following the operation of the Berlioz mind with new understanding and delight; and the performance of that movement and of the entire work remained essentially the same—though more rigid in 1946 than in 1939, more relaxed again in 1953—and unequaled by any of the others I heard. It owes its effectiveness to its accuracy—especially its accuracy in tempo. Toscanini once pointed out to me the necessity of obeying the Berlioz metronome directions that Koussevitzky, for one, grandly ignored: they produced tempos which integrated not only the sections of a movement (notably the third movement) but the movements within the entire work—making the recurring viola melody, for example, move at the same pace in each movement.

With RIAA equalization, and with treble knob turned down a little from flat position, the sound from a 2s-4s copy of LM-1951 is very fine.

Marche hongroise (Rákóczy March) from *The Damnation of Faust*

(1920.) La Scala Orchestra. 78 rpm: 74695 and (6300).

1945. NBC Symphony (derived from the NBC recording of the broadcast of September 2, 1945).
LP: in LM-6026.

It is interesting to note that the earlier performance broadens out in tempo at climactic points, and that the tighter performance twenty-five years later does not. The 8H sound from a 4s side 4 of LM-6026, made live and glossy by "enhancement," requires an 8-kc cutoff and turning down of the treble knob from flat position.

Overture, *The Roman Carnival*

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1834.

The performance is superb; and so is the recorded sound of the Andante sostenuto from a 1s side of LM-1834; but in the Allegro a drop in volume level makes the sound seem shallower and less solid. The volume must therefore be turned up in the Allegro.

Romeo and Juliet

Part 2: *Romeo Alone—Melancholy—Concert and Ball—Great Festivity at the Capulets'*

Part 3: *Love Scene: Serene Night—The Capulet Garden Silent and Deserted*

1947. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1160. LP transfer: LM-1019.

It was Toscanini who made us acquainted first with these

two instrumental movements (a short choral passage after the instrumental introduction of the *Love Scene* is omitted) and the *Queen Mab* Scherzo, then with the entire work, which he performed in 1942 with the New York Philharmonic and in 1947 with NBC Symphony. And his performances of the music were unequaled by any others I heard.

I find that M-1160, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives sound that is very beautiful in the quieter portions but lacks the necessary fullness, spaciousness, brightness and luster in *Great Fertility at the Capulets*; and there is high-frequency distortion at the ends of sides 5 and 6 even with a compliant Electro-Sonic cartridge. And an 11S side of the first-issued LM-1019, also with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, gives sound with less amplitude and brightness, but clear, clean and well balanced; whereas in 1955 I found that a copy of the "enhanced" version (25s and higher) revealed tipping of the balance toward the treble end and tremendous artificial resonance in sound that was shallower, less solid, less clear, less clean, altered in timbres, and made almost unlistenable by the distortion at the end of the *Love Scene*.

Part 4: *Queen Mab, or The Fairy of Dreams*

1951. NBC Symphony (derived from the NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 10, 1951). LP: in LM-6026.

Toscanini's marvelous performance of this delicate piece was veiled and distant; but LM-6026 documents the close pickup used for the broadcasts in Carnegie Hall, placing

DISCOGRAPHY: BIZET

one's ear where the sound is near and sharply distinct and the antique cymbals at the end are disastrously loud. I played the recording on a 4s side 4 in LM-6026 with RIAA equalization and with treble knob turned down a little from flat position.

BIZET

L'Arlésienne: Farandole

(1920.) La Scala Orchestra. (64986 and 839.)

Carmen: Suite

(1920.) Prelude to Act 4. La Scala Orchestra.

(64999 and 839.)

1952. NBC Symphony. LRM-7013 and in LM-6026.

I never heard the Scala recordings. The magnificent 1952 performance is reproduced by the first-issued LRM-7013 (with RIAA equalization) with "enhanced" sound that is shallow and blowzily "brilliant"; but a 3s side 1 in the later LM-6026 has the "unenhanced" recording which produces the original true and beautiful sound.

BOITO

Prologue to *Mefistofele*

1954. NBC Symphony with Nicola Moscona, the Robert Shaw Chorale and the Columbus Boy-choir (recorded during the broadcast of March 14, 1954). LP: LM-1849.

DISCOGRAPHY: BRAHMS

BRAHMS

CONCERTOS

No. 2 in B flat for Piano

(1940.) NBC Symphony with Vladimir Horowitz. 78 rpm: M-740. LP transfer: LCT-1025.

When M-740 was issued I reported Horowitz's beautiful-sounding but unsuitably "sinuous, svelte" playing of the solo part and the "superb and beautiful-sounding orchestral framework created by Toscanini and recorded . . . in Carnegie Hall." I haven't heard the recording since then.

Concerto in A minor for Violin and Cello

1948. NBC Symphony with Mischa Mischakoff and Frank Miller (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 13, 1948). LP: LM-2178.

Hungarian Dances Nos. 1, 17, 20 and 21

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1834.

SYMPHONIES

No. 1 in C minor

(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-875.

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1702 and in LM-6108.

When M-875 was issued I reported that Toscanini's straightforward performance had "the characteristic tonal and plastic beauty of all his performances, recorded with bril-

liance and spaciousness, but without the depth and body of the sound of his 1936 recordings." LM-1702 I haven't heard.

No. 2 in D

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1731 and in LM-6108.

I cannot imagine anything more beautiful and effective than Toscanini's straightforward but subtly plastic pacing and shaping of the work. I didn't hear LM-1731 when it was first issued; but the 11s-8s copy of the "enhanced" version (6s and 6s and higher) that I have now produces beautiful sound which appears to be "enhanced" only to the extent of a slight treble boost that is audible in the violins and can be canceled by turning the treble knob down a little from flat position. The recording needs bass turn-over at 800, and additional stepping up of bass in the finale.

No. 3 in F

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1836 and in LM-6108.

I remember the swift and light-footed progression of the first movement when Toscanini first played the work here in 1929, and the change to greater breadth and weight in later years, but nothing like the ponderous slowness and the lack of forward propulsion that are to be heard on LM-1836—not only in the first movement, which should be *Allegro con brio*, but in the third, which should be *Poco*

Allegretto, and even in the finale, which is a little deliberate for an *alla breve* Allegro. Nor do I remember ever hearing the retardation in the dozen measures before *Un poco sostenuto* in the coda of the finale; but I am sure I do remember an insistence on the tempo being maintained. And the same for the retardation in the coda of the second movement, which up to that point is played very beautifully.

The recorded sound from a 178-16s copy of LM-1836, though agreeable, is enormously heavy, requiring bass turn-over at 250. Its other remarkable characteristic is its distinctness of texture, which at one point seems to me excessive: I don't think the violins' accompaniment figures should be so obtrusive in the passage beginning at measure 194 in the finale.

No. 4 in E minor

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1713 and in LM-6108.

Here again I cannot imagine anything more beautiful and effective than this performance, with its steadiness, its continuity of impetus, flow and tension, its organic coherence, its clarity of texture, its exquisite modeling of phrase. The first and last movements are, then, free of the traditional changes of tempo that are not requested in the score; and this is especially important in the fourth-movement *passacaglia*, whose effect of gradually built-up cumulative force requires the pace of the opening statement of the ground bass to be maintained inexorably in the succession of variations, as Brahms directs.

"Enhanced" pressings supposedly began with 5s-5s; but I can hear no "enhancement" in the beautiful sound from my 8s-7s copy of the first-issued LM-1713, with bass turn-over at LP and treble roll-off at 12. In 1955, however, the later pressing I compared it with showed a tipping of balance toward the treble end in increased brightness up above and lessened solidity down below.

Tragic Overture

(1937.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 15386/7 in M-507.

When the recording was issued I reported that the performance was superb. I haven't heard it since then.

Variations on a Theme of Haydn

1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm:
M-355. LP transfers: LCT-1023 and CAL-326.

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1725.

In the incandescent earlier performance one can hear how marvelously sensitized the New York Philharmonic was to Toscanini's direction; in the later one how close the NBC Symphony's playing had come by 1952 to the Philharmonic's—close, but to my ears still not all the way. As for Toscanini himself, one is surprised by a couple of changes in the later performance—a slowing down in the second part of Variation 3 that is disproportionate to the basic tempo established in the first part; a similar acceleration in the final passacaglia—surprised because of Toscanini's sense for coherence in tempo, and because these two changes reverse his tendency toward increased strict-

DISCOGRAPHY: CATALANI

ness of tempo in later years. I hasten to add that the two details don't make the later performance anything less than a superb one.

The first-issued LM-1725 gave very beautiful sound. In 1955 I found that a 14s copy showed a slight tipping of balance toward the treble end in increased brightness up above and lessened solidity down below.

CATALANI

Dance of the Water Nymphs from *Lorelei*

Prelude to Act 4 of *La Wally*

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6026.

CHERUBINI

Requiem Mass in C minor

1950. NBC Symphony with Robert Shaw Chorale
(derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast
of February 18, 1950). LP: LM-2000.

With RIAA equalization and with treble knob turned down from flat position, a 6s-4s copy of LM-2000 reproduces the beautiful performance with excellent sound.

Symphony in D

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1745.

DEBUSSY

Ibéria (No. 2 of *Images* for orchestra)

1950. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1833.

DISCOGRAPHY: DONIZETTI

With RIAA equalization an 8s copy of the recording reproduces the superb performance with brilliant sound except for a less bright, less clear and less spacious stretch beginning at No. 48 in the second movement, taken from what Marsh identifies as the broadcast of November 2, 1938, but what Victor and Walter Toscanini have identified as the broadcast of March 27, 1948.

La Mer

1950. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1221 and LM-1833.

I find that a 2s side of the first-issued LM-1221, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, reproduces this definitive performance with very beautiful sound that can be made even more beautiful by turning the treble knob up a little from flat position. In 1955 I found that the later LM-1221 (20s and higher) reproduced the performance with the blurring, the blowzy "brilliance" and the falsification of the first "enhanced" version; and that LM-1833 reproduced it with the worse blowzy confusions and falsifications of the second "enhanced" version.

DONIZETTI

Overture to *Don Pasquale*

(1921.) La Scala Orchestra. (66030/1 and 841.)

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7028 and in LM-6026.

I never heard the Scala recording. And I find that the first-issued LRM-7028, with RIAA equalization, reproduces another definitive performance with good sound that is very

reverberant; and that in the sound from a 3s side 1 in the later LM-6026 the reverberation is made more pronounced by the treble boost that gives the violins a nasty sharpness which can be eliminated only by an 8-kc cutoff.

DUKAS

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

1929. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm:
7021. LP transfer: CAL-309.

(1950.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 3022A/4A in DM-
1416. LP transfers: LM-1118 and LM-2056.

I can testify that the astonishingly faster 1929 performance is the one with which Toscanini astonished audiences in Carnegie Hall at the time. 7021 has to be played with bass turn-over at 250 and bass knob turned down from flat position; and with treble roll-off at 12 and a 6-kc cutoff the violins are clear and bright. CAL-309, with RIAA equalization and a 6-kc cutoff, gives sound that is less ample, less distinct and less bright.

DM-1416, with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, gives superb sound, which comes off a 1s side of LM-1118 with a little less amplitude but with adequate solidity and brilliance, and comes off a 1s side of the later LM-2056 sharpened by a treble boost that can be canceled by turning the treble knob down from flat position.

DVOŘÁK

Symphony No. 5 in E minor (*From the New World*)

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1778.

DISCOGRAPHY: ELGAR

Toscanini's performance of this battered work without the usual distortions makes it sound "as fresh and glistening as creation itself." And with RIAA equalization a 45-4s copy of the record gives excellent sound which can be made even better by turning the treble knob up a little from flat position.

ELGAR

Enigma Variations

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1725.

FRANCK

Psyche and Eros from Psyché

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1838.

With RIAA equalization a 9s copy of the recording reproduces the exquisite performance with lovely sound that is in striking contrast to the beefed-up, distorted and falsified sound of Musorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* from the same record.

GALILEI

Gagliarda (transcribed by Respighi in *Old Dances and Airs for Lute*, Suite No. 1)

(1920.) La Scala Orchestra. (74672 and 6301.)

GERSHWIN

An American in Paris

(1945.) NBC Symphony. LP transfer: LM-9020.

DISCOGRAPHY: GLINKA

Toscanini's pace for the beginning is too fast and unyielding for the leisurely saunter it should be, and for some of the details to make their effect; but his feeling for melody causes him to pace and shape the blues section with plasticity, grace and verve that are very exciting. With RIAA equalization the sound from a 3s copy of the recording is warm, spacious, clean, and clear in texture, but needs turning up of the treble knob from flat position for adequate brightness.

GLINKA

Kamarinskaya

1940. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of December 21, 1940). LP: in LM-6026.

GLUCK

Orfeo ed Euridice: Act 2

1929. *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: 7138 in M-65.
(1946.) *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-9903 in M-1172).
1952. The entire act. NBC Symphony with Nan Merriman, Barbara Gibson and the Robert Shaw Chorale (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 22, 1952). LP: LM-1850 and LVT-1041.

With RIAA equalization and treble knob turned down well

DISCOGRAPHY: GROFÉ

below flat position a 2s-1s copy of LM-1850 reproduces the superb performance with sound which on the first side is tight and strident in the tuttis but which on the second side is spacious and lovely. In 1956 I found that the sound from LVT-1041 was less strident but had less solidity down below, requiring bass to be stepped up.

GROFÉ

Grand Canyon Suite

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (M-1038). LP transfer: LM-1004.

HAYDN

SYMPHONIES

No. 88 in G

(1938.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-454. LP transfer: (LCT-7).

With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, M-454 reproduces the superbly enlivening performance with sound that is unresonant but clean, undistorted and agreeable. When the LP dubbing was issued I reported that it gave a good approximation of the 78-rpm sound, but with less fullness and brightness.

No. 94 in G (*Surprise*)

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1789.

Toscanini conducts the Minuet with his eye fixed on the direction Allegro molto instead of with his ear fixed on the

music, whose articulation and sense require a slower tempo than his. The Andante pace of the second movement—correct for the time signature—is too fast for the music; the Allegro molto of the finale not only is too fast but is too rigidly maintained, as is the essentially right Vivace assai of the first movement. With RIAA equalization the recorded sound from a 1s copy of the recording is excellent.

No. 98 in B flat

1945. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1025.

The more relaxed and expansive 1938 performance was even better; but this one has the enlivening sharpness of inflection and contour that made Toscanini's playing of Haydn so exciting; and considered by itself it is superb. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, M-1025 gives sound that is full and clear except on side 6, where it is compressed, thin, nasal, and not agreeable. I heard at the time that this side was a dubbing from the original recording which Toscanini had insisted on.

No. 101 in D (*Clock*)

1929. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: M-57. LP transfer: CAL-375.

(1946 and 1947.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1368). LP transfer: LM-1038.

The earlier performance was a superb one in its more expansive style; the later one was made exciting by its faster tempo, greater energy and sharper inflection.

I find that M-57 produces heavy bass that requires bass turn-over at 250 and the bass knob turned down from flat

DISCOGRAPHY: HÉROLD

position; with treble roll-off at 12 the violins are bright, and are made brighter by turning the treble knob up a little from flat position. With RIAA equalization and a 6-kc cutoff CAL-375 gives a dim sound that can be improved a bit by turning up the treble knob.

I never heard DM-1368; but I reported the extreme and unpleasant acoustical deadness and the harshness of the sound from the first-issued LM-1038; and in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version of the recording on the later LM-1038 (20s and higher) produced blurred and noisily confused sound that was unlistenable.

HÉROLD

Overture to *Zampa*

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7014 and LM-1834.

I know no more impressive and fascinating examples of what Toscanini's powers could achieve than what his exquisite taste in the molding of phrase, his grace, his feeling for continuity of impetus, flow, tension and shape in a developing form of sound made of "pop" pieces like this one.

Both records (4s for LM-1834), with RIAA equalization, produce "enhanced" sound that has a shallow, noisy, blowzy "brilliance."

HUMPERDINCK

Prelude to *Hänsel und Gretel*

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7014 and in LM-6026.

DISCOGRAPHY: KABALEVSKY

With RIAA equalization LRM-7014 reproduces the genial performance with full, spacious, rich sound, and without the beefing up of both treble and bass ends in the sound from a 7s side 3 in LM-6026.

KABALEVSKY

Overture to *Colas Breugnon*

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9978-B in M-1178; 11-9979-B in DM-1178; 12-3022-B in DM-1416; 12-3156.

KODÁLY

Háry János Suite

1947. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 29, 1947). LP: LM-1973.

LIADOV

Kikimora

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7014 and LM-2056.

MASSENET

Fête bohème from *Scènes pittoresques*.

(1921.) La Scala Orchestra. (74725 and 6301.)

MENDELSSOHN

Incidental Music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

- (1921.) Scherzo and Wedding March. La Scala Orchestra. (74779 and 74745; combined on 6302.)
- 1926. Nocturne and Scherzo. New York Philharmonic. Brunswick 50074.
- 1929. Scherzo. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: Victor 7080 in M-57. LP transfer: on CAL-326.
- (1946.) Scherzo. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9861 in DM-1167, (11-9860 in M-1167, 12-1130 in DM-1368, 12-3156).
- 1947. Overture, Intermezzo, Nocturne, Scherzo, Wedding March, Finale. NBC Symphony with Edna Phillips and women's chorus. 78 rpm: M-1280. LP transfer: LM-1221.

The Scherzo—from its very first performance with the New York Philharmonic in 1926 (I never heard the one with the Scala Orchestra)—elicited a storm of applause with its incandescent virtuosity. The performance that impressed Philharmonic audiences in this way was recorded for Victor in 1929; and with this one fixed in my mind as *the* Toscanini performance of the Scherzo by this recording, it was a dumbfounding experience years later to come across the 1926 Brunswick recording and to hear its slower tempo and how much less than incandescent by later standards had been the performance that had impressed audiences as incandescent virtuosity in 1926.

Of the 1946 Scherzo I could write at the time that it was

brilliant but provided another demonstration of the fact that Toscanini had achieved with no other orchestra the incandescence of his style that he had achieved with the Philharmonic. However, by 1947 the NBC Symphony was able to produce for him a Scherzo almost identical with the 1929 Philharmonic's—the difference being only that at the two points in the development where the orchestra's crescendo to *fortissimo* breaks off, the two-measure interpolations of solo flute and clarinet don't fit themselves in with the same easy precision as in the Philharmonic performance.

Toscanini's realizations of the other exquisitely imagined pieces were—in their delicacy, animation (on occasion their elegantly impassioned animation), grace and plasticity—enchanting. But in the 1947 Nocturne Arthur Berv doesn't achieve the legato flow in the horn solo that he achieved at the rehearsals and the broadcast; and the poor recording causes him to be heard too faintly.

The 1946 Scherzo is reproduced by 11-9861 with bright and clear sound; but the 1947 performances were recorded with too low volume level and insufficient brightness by a microphone placed too far back and too high. It was not Toscanini who approved the recording but—during his absence in Europe—a Victor committee that included Chotzinoff: I doubt that he would have passed the Nocturne; and even the committee didn't approve the side with an additional vocal piece, "You Spotted Snakes," which had been broadcast and recorded. I find that DM-1280 produces a badly balanced Overture which needs bass turn-over at 250, and which with treble roll-off at 12 is unresonant

and dull, requiring the treble knob to be turned up from flat position, and requiring also a 6-kc cutoff. The Intermezzo sounds good with turn-over at 500 and roll-off at 12; the other pieces need to have the treble knob turned up. A 3s side of the first-issued LM-1221 gives sound that is even less bright, and that needs bass turn-over at 400 (629 for the Scherzo). And in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a later LM-1221 (20s and higher) gave sound that was brightened at the cost of naturalness and clean definition.

I find that 7080 produces a heavy bass that calls for turn-over at 400; but with treble roll-off at 12 it reproduces the performance well. CAL-326, with RIAA equalization and 6-kc cutoff, reproduces it with less distinctness and brightness; but one can get an idea of what the performance was like in some ways—its combination of energy and feathery lightness, but not its tonal color, the violins being muffled.

Octet for Strings

(1945.) Scherzo. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-8966 in M-1025, 11-8967 in DM-1025.

1947. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of March 30, 1947). LM-1869.

It is the later performance of the Scherzo of this work that is slower and more sharply accented and inflected, the earlier one that is incandescently faster and lighter, in the style of the Scherzo of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*

music. The other movements are made elegantly impassioned. 11-8966, played with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, reproduces the earlier Scherzo superbly. An 8s side of LM-1869, with RIAA equalization and an 8-kc cutoff, produces good sound in the first two movements, a little harsher sound in the Scherzo, and strident tuttis in the finale.

SYMPHONIES

No. 4 in A (*Italian*)

1954. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of February 28, 1954). LM-1851.

As against the lightness, suavity, and refinement of orchestral execution that made Koussevitzky's performance the marvel it was, Toscanini's performance gives it sharpness of inflection, energy and tension. I think Koussevitzky's was the more suitable treatment of this music; but Toscanini's is an exciting experience too.

A 3s side of LM-1851, with RIAA equalization, gives the finale without the "enhancement" of the other movements—which is to say with sound that is close, not spacious, dry, but clear and clean. The second and third movements come off the record with artificially resonant and glossy sound which in the first movement is blurred on top and down below.

No. 5 in D minor (*Reformation*)

1953. NBC Symphony (recorded during the broadcast of December 13, 1953). LM-1851.

MOZART

Concerto K.191 for Bassoon

1947. NBC Symphony with Leonard Sharrow. 78 rpm: M-1304. LP transfer: LM-1030.

Sharrow's playing of the solo part is excellent; but it is the life in the orchestral context from Toscanini's inflection that makes the performance delightful. With bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12, M-1304 gives excellent sound, as did the "unenhanced" dubbing that I found on LM-1030 in 1955.

Divertimento K.287 for Horns and Strings

1947. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: DM-1355. LP transfers: LM-13 and LM-2001.

In January 1948 Koussevitzky broadcast again the performance of this piece that in 1946 had shocked Toscanini into playing it himself to show Koussevitzky how; and I heard, among other things, a silky, placidly uninflected delivery of the long cantilena of the Adagio which revealed Koussevitzky's ignorance of what to do between the *p* here and the *f* eight measures later. Toscanini's knowledge of this is evident in the powerful shaping of the Adagio as a grandly impassioned vocal declamation, and also in the profusion of inflection that enlivens the Allegros, the variation movement and the Minuet.

With bass turn-over at 500 and treble roll-off at 12, DM-1355 gives excellent sound; and the first LP dubbing on LM-13 also gives good sound, which is less full and spacious, and which comes off a 15s side of the later LM-2001 beefed

up at both ends with treble and bass boosts that can be canceled by turning the treble and bass knobs down well below their flat positions.

Overture to *The Magic Flute*

(1938.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 15190.

Both the solemn and the light passages are performed superbly. Bass remains heavy even with turn-over at 250; but with treble roll-off at 12 the sound is sufficiently bright.

SYMPHONIES

K.385 in D (*Haffner*)

1929. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: M-65. LP transfer: CAL-326.

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1172. LP transfer: LM-1038.

It is astonishing to hear in the earlier performance the changes of pace in the quiet phrases that follow the opening proclamations of the first movement; and as against this expansive plasticity the steady tempo of the later performance is part of the simplification that makes it grand and apotheosized, and equally impressive in its own way. The later tempos of the second and third movements are faster; and I prefer the earlier Andante and the later Minuet.

M-65 gives heavy bass that requires turn-over at 400; with treble roll-off at 12, violins are not bright but can be brightened by turning the treble knob up from flat position. CAL-326, with RIAA equalization and 6-kc cutoff, gives

sound that is less full but better balanced; and it too can be brightened with the treble knob.

I don't have M-1172; but when it was issued I reported the unpleasantness of the extreme acoustical deadness and the sharpness of the sound. Nor do I have the first-issued LM-1038, about which, in 1950, I reported again the unpleasantness of the sound. In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a copy of the later LM-1038 (20s and higher) gave blurred and noisily confused sound that was unlistenable.

K.543 in E flat

(1920.) Minuet and finale. La Scala Orchestra. 78 rpm: 74668/9 and (6303).

1948. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of March 6, 1948). LP: LM-2001.

The earlier Minuet is much slower—in a real minuet tempo; the finale is in the same tempo both times. That tempo of the finale and the one of the first-movement Allegro in the later performance work well, but everything else is played too fast for the proper flow, articulation and effect of the music—sacrificed to the demonstration of an Andante that is not Adagio (second movement), and an Adagio (introduction to the first movement) and an Allegretto (Minuet) that are not "too slow."

With RIAA equalization a 2s side of LM-2001 gives sound with ear-piercing violins that are made to sound normal and agreeable by turning the treble knob down

drastically from flat position. But the stridency and gritty distortion in the third and fourth movements (produced by the record but not by the tape from which it was processed) are eliminated only by an 8-kc cutoff.

K.550 in G minor

(1938 and 1939.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-631.

(1950.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1789.

My feeling about Toscanini's controversial performance changed in the course of years: from considering it "tumultuous" and "ferocious" when M-631 was issued I came to find it completely and satisfyingly right when I heard the performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra in 1942. And as I have listened to it now it has seemed to me that Toscanini's powerful inflection in the first movement represented a perception that this music was special and unique in Mozart and had to be played in a special way that no other music of his would be played.

Nor is it only about the performance that I have made discoveries. M-631, played on good equipment of its day, gave harsh sound; but played on good equipment of today—with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, and with an 8-kc cutoff and treble knob turned down from flat position—it has astonished me with sound that is unresonant but clean, undistorted and good. The sound has in fact astonished me further by turning out to be clearer in definition than the somewhat reverberant and harsh sound from a 5s side of LM-1789, which needs bass turn-over at 800 and treble knob turned down well below flat position.

And what M-631 reveals with its clearer definition is more detailed inflection that is more sharply outlined—which is to say, better playing than in the performance on LM-1789. Not only that, but the earlier performance is more relaxed: thus, although the basic tempos are the same, Toscanini in 1938 reduces the tempo a little for the second subject in the first movement and the finale, but keeps strict tempo in 1950.

K.551 in C (known as the *Jupiter*)

(1945 and 1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1080.
LP transfer: LM-1030.

The performance gives us the first movement with all its majesty and radiance, and a beautiful realization of the Minuet; but in the second movement the real Andante cantabile in terms of the 3/4 time signature, which works with the opening statements and with a flow of quarters, eighths, and even sixteenths, becomes too fast when the flow is of thirty-seconds—briefly in measure 12, and at greater length in the recapitulation. And the faster-than-usual finale, which might be all right if reproduced clearly, is blurred by reverberation, with the coda further damaged by high-frequency distortion.

In the earlier movements M-1080, with bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12, gives bright and solid sound. I don't have the first-issued LM-1030; but in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version of the LP dubbing on a later LM-1030 (15s and higher) produced blurring in the ear-

DISCOGRAPHY: MUSORGSKY

lier movements and high-frequency distortion in the finale that made the recording unlistenable.

MUSORGSKY

Pictures at an Exhibition (orchestrated by Ravel)

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1838.

The most remarkable achievement of Musorgsky in the original work, of Ravel in his uniquely faithful transcription, and of Toscanini in his magnificent realization in living sound, is the *Catacombs* episode. And this superb passage for the brass is one of those that are distorted by the extreme peaking of treble in the "enhanced" sound from an 8s-9s copy of LM-1838 played with RIAA equalization. One can get something close to the original sound by turning the treble knob down drastically from flat position.

PAGANINI

Moto Perpetuo

(1939.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 15547 in M-590.

Toscanini had this exhibition piece for violin played by all the NBC Symphony violins to exhibit their virtuosity, which they do in breathtaking fashion. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12 the sound is agreeable but not lustrous.

PIZZETTI

The Quay of the Port of Famagusta from *La Pisanella* Suite

(1920.) La Scala Orchestra. (64952 and 840.)

PONCHIELLI

Dance of the Hours from La Gioconda

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7005 and LM-1834.

Another impressive, fascinating and moving example of Toscanini's application of his powers to the playing of a "pop" piece with the same 100 per cent involvement of himself as to the playing of a Beethoven symphony.

With RIAA equalization the first-issued LRM-7005 gives sound that is superbly full, solid, spacious and lustrous, but a 4s side of the later LM-1834 gives sound that is glossier (e.g., the cellos), with plucked bass notes and *sfz* *tutti*s softened and spread and less solid.

PROKOFIEV

Classical Symphony

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-9020.

In earlier performances Toscanini's tempos were the usual ones; and the second movement in particular was played as the graceful *Andante* that it is. But on LM-9020 he plays this movement with strict obedience to the *Larghetto* in the score—which is to say, much too slowly for the flow of the music.

Koussevitzky's performance of the first and last movements was a succession of sonorities of miraculous refinement, radiance and incorporeal lightness that constituted one of the wonders of the age. But the clear texture of strands of sound excitingly enlivened by sharp inflection

DISCOGRAPHY: PUCCINI

that Toscanini produces seems to me the correct treatment of the music.

With RIAA equalization a 6s side of LM-9020 gives excellent sound.

PUCCINI

La Bohème

1946. NBC Symphony with Licia Albanese, Ann Mc-Knight, Jan Peerce, Francesco Valentino and chorus directed by Peter Wilhousky (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of February 3 and 10, 1946). LP: LM-6006.

RAVEL

Daphnis et Chloé: Suite No. 2

- (1949.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1374). LP: LM-1043.

RESPIGHI

Fountains of Rome

- (1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1768.

This engaging piece is given the superb reproduction (by an 8s side of LM-1768 with RIAA equalization) that Victor didn't achieve with more consequential music.

Pines of Rome

- (1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1768.

DISCOGRAPHY: ROSSINI

This piece too is given the superb reproduction (by a 17s side of LM-1768 with RIAA equalization) that Victor didn't achieve with more consequential music. But the reproduction includes a momentary break in the sustained note that begins the oboe solo in the Janiculum episode; and a repeated cutting down of the volume that Toscanini builds up in the final crescendo that was one of his most extraordinary achievements in orchestral performance.

Roman Festivals

(1949.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-55 and LM-1973.

ROSSINI

OVERTURES

- 1929. *The Barber of Seville*. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: 7255. LP transfer: CAL-326.
- 1936. *L'Italiana in Algeri*. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: 14161.
Semiramide. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: M-408. LP transfer: CAL-309.
- (1938.) *La Scala di Seta*. BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 15191.
- (1939.) *William Tell*. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-605. LP transfer: LM-14.
- (1945.) *The Barber of Seville* } NBC Symphony. 78
La Cenerentola } rpm: M-1037. LP trans-
La Gazza Ladra } fers: LM-1044 and LM-
Il Signor Bruschino } 2040.

DISCOGRAPHY: ROSSINI

(1951.) *Semiramide*. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7054 and LM-2040.

(1953.) *William Tell*. NBC Symphony. LP: LRY-9000, LM-1986, LRM-7054 and LM-2040.

The 1929 *Barber* comes off 7255 with heavy bass that needs turn-over at 400; with treble roll-off at 12 and a 6-kc cutoff the sound is fairly bright. CAL-326, with RIAA equalization and a 6-kc cutoff, gives sound that isn't bad in the introduction but becomes muffled at the beginning of the Allegro.

The two 1936 performances are the most incandescent examples on records of the marvelously sensitized virtuosity the New York Philharmonic achieved under Toscanini. With bass turn-over at 500 and treble roll-off at 12, 14161 produces full, solid and bright sound, and M-408 a similar sound in which the violins are more luminous. And with RIAA equalization and 8-kc cutoff CAL-309 produces a close approximation of the marvels of subtle inflection and coloring recorded on M-408.

The marvelously sensitized virtuosity which the Philharmonic had exhibited also in a 1934 performance of *La Scala di Seta* was not equaled by the BBC Symphony in 1938; but the performance on 15191 is a superb one. And with bass turn-over at 250 and treble roll-off at 12 its recorded sound is excellent.

The *Barber* moves a little more swiftly in 1945 than in 1929; but the performance is essentially the same. And M-1037, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, reproduces all the superb 1945 performances with solid,

clear sound. I don't have the LP dubbings on the first-issued LM-1044; but in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" versions on the later LM-1044 (20s-20s and higher) were blurred and unclear and enveloped in high-frequency distortion; and I find now that an 11S-1S copy of the recently issued LM-2040 offers the dubbings with the "enhancement" removed except for a treble boost that can be canceled by turning the treble knob down from flat position. Bass is better with turn-over at 629.

The 1951 *Semiramide* documents the NBC Symphony's inability even at this late date to produce the marvels of the Philharmonic's playing in 1936; and it also documents Toscanini's inability on this later occasion to equal his own earlier achievement. The swifter, simpler, tauter introduction of 1951 is less effective than the slower, more expansive introduction of 1936; and the Allegro in 1951 doesn't have the vital energy that makes it so exciting in 1936—e.g., in the violins' very first quiet statements of the principal theme, and later in their recitative-like statements leading to the recapitulation of this theme. In addition the first-issued LRM-7054, with RIAA equalization, reproduces the 1951 performance with less solidity than M-408 does the 1936 performance, and needs to have the treble knob turned down from flat position. And the 11S-1S copy of the later LM-2040, with RIAA equalization, reproduces the 1951 performance with bass cut and treble peaking that require bass turn-over at 800 and treble knob turned down well below flat position.

The 1953 *William Tell* is one of the most beautiful and

DISCOGRAPHY: SAINT-SAËNS

perfectly achieved performances of the last years, and one which the first-issued LRY-9000, renumbered LM-1986, reproduces with magnificent sound. The later LRM-7054, with RIAA equalization, gives it a glossier sound; the still later LM-2040, with the same equalization, reproduces it with bass cut and treble peaking that require bass turn-over at 629 and treble knob turned down considerably from flat position.

Passo a sei from *William Tell*

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-9069 in M-1037) and 11-9070 in DM-1037. LP transfer: LRM-7005.

The charming piece is played with an enchanting grace and lilt. The 78-rpm recording reproduces it with solid and clear sound; the LP dubbing with sound that is less full and less bright.

SAINT-SAËNS

Danse macabre

1950. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1505). LP: LM-1118.

Symphony No. 3 in C minor

1952. NBC Symphony with George Crook, organ, and Joseph Kahn, piano (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 15, 1952). LP: LM-1874.

SCHUBERT

SYMPHONIES

No. 5 in B flat

(1953.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1869.

This early imitative work is made delightful by the lightness and delicacy, the grace and lilt, the beautiful modeling of Toscanini's performance. With RIAA equalization a 45 side of LM-1869 gives excellent sound, with tutti's closer and fuller in the first movement than in the others—the explanation being that after the first movement the microphone, for no evident reason, was moved back, making the sound of the subsequent movements more distant and flat.

No. 8 in B minor (*Unfinished*)

1950. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1456). LP: LM-54 and LM-9022.

Momentary conditions of mind and emotion produced a performance less serene and more dramatic than the extraordinary one of 1949, with continuous tension in the progression from the quiet openings to the dramatic climaxes.

The remake of the first movement comes off the first-issued LM-54 with greater volume than the second movement (I never heard DM-1456). The sound needs bass turn-over at 800 for solidity; and even then the plucked bass notes in the second movement are barely audible. In 1955 I found that the later LM-9022 reproduced the two movements with equal volume at a higher level; that bass

DISCOGRAPHY: SCHUMANN

was stepped up too much; and that the sound was good, but not as good as the original.

No. 9 in C

1947. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1167. LP transfer: LM-1040.

1953. NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1835.

The earlier recording is interesting right at the start with the exaggerated accents in the opening statement of the solo horn, which may be one of the last manifestations of the tenseness, rigidity and drive that were evident in the performances of 1945-46. And it is interesting also for what it still retains from the great 1941 performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra—notably the tremendous coda of the first movement—and what it already has of the great 1953 performance—notably the finale, and its coda that is less overwhelming than the one of 1941.

DM-1167, with bass turn-over at 500 and treble roll-off at 12, gives excellent sound; LM-1040 I don't have, but when it was issued I reported that the dubbed sound was good but less spacious and resonantly live than the original. And I find that a 1S-1S copy of LM-1835, with RIAA equalization, gives sound that needs to have treble and bass knobs turned down well below flat position.

SCHUMANN

Manfred Overture

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 12-0756/7A in M-1287; 12-0759A/61A in DM-1287. LP transfers: LM-6 and LM-9022.

DISCOGRAPHY: SIBELIUS

With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, M-1287 reproduces the impassioned and beautifully shaped performance with sound that is full, spacious, rich and lustrous. I don't have the original transfer on LM-6; but in 1955 I found that the sound from the later LM-9022 was badly blurred by "enhancement."

Symphony No. 3 in E flat (*Rhenish*)

1949. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of November 12, 1949). LP: LM-2048.

I heard only part of the recording, which reproduced the magnificent performance with strident sound.

SIBELIUS

Finlandia

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7005 and LM-1834.

S M E T A N A

The Moldau

(1950.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1505). LP: LM-1118 and LM-2056.

A genial and engaging performance of this genial and engaging piece, with one curious detail. The second section is marked *L'istesso tempo*; and this continuation of the tempo of the first section into the second is achieved by making the dotted quarter of the 6/8 of the first section

DISCOGRAPHY: SOUSA

equivalent to the quarter of the 2/4 of the second. This is the kind of thing Toscanini was very careful about; and in the earlier performance preserved on the V-disc the beats do continue unchanged in the transition from the first section to the second; but on LM-1118 there is an awkwardly discontinuous change of pace in the transition (possibly two different tapes were spliced together at this point).

In 1955 I found that the blurring resonance of the "enhanced" version on a later LM-1118 (25s and higher) robbed the sound of clarity and solidity. I find now that a 1s side of the first-issued LM-1118, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, gives spacious and lustrous sound; and that a 1s side of LM-2056 gives this sound with greater volume and a slight tipping of the balance toward the treble end.

SOUSA

The Stars and Stripes Forever

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9188.

Toscanini's first performance of this piece in 1943, preserved on the V-disc, was relaxed and expansive, with an enchanting lightness and lilt in the contrasting soft passage of the opening section and a breadth in the concluding section that the more tense and driving 1945 performance doesn't have. But with its energy and life, its beautiful shaping of the melodies, its clarity of texture, even the later performance is wonderful and exciting.

With bass turn-over at 629 and treble roll-off at 12, 11-9188 gives sound that is shallow, coarse and not cleanly defined in quiet.

STRAUSS, JOHANN

Waltz, *On the Beautiful Blue Danube*

(1942.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-8580).

Here we get not only Toscanini's taste in the molding of phrase and his sense for continuity applied to a "pop" number, but his feeling for the tempo rubato of the waltz. He had already exhibited it in an enchanting performance of Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* with the Philharmonic in 1931; hence it was no surprise in the first performance of the *Blue Danube* in 1941—only a delight. And by the time he recorded the piece, a few months later, he had learned little refinements in the pacing of the principal melody that made the performance even more alluring.

I have only the V-disc that in this instance was derived from the Victor recording; and with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12 it gives sound that isn't spacious but is agreeable.

Tritsch-Tratsch Polka

(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9188.

The Toscanini energy and verve make this engaging piece another delight. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, 11-9188 gives sound that is shallow and brash.

STRAUSS, RICHARD

Death and Transfiguration

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1891.

Don Juan

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1157.

An accurate and plastically coherent realization of the score, more effective than the usual underlining of every point. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12 a 2s side of LM-1157 gives sound that is excellent except for occasional distortion in the high violins that can be cleaned up by an 8-kc cutoff or turning down of the treble knob from flat position. In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a later side (10s and higher) gave sound that was glossier but had less clarity of definition up above and down below.

Don Quixote

1953. NBC Symphony with Frank Miller, cello (recorded during the broadcast of November 22, 1953). LP: LM-2026.

Another accurate performance, marvelous in its clarity of densely woven texture, its plastic beauty, its expressive point, and superbly reproduced by a 5s-8s copy of LM-2026 with RIAA equalization.

Till Eulenspiegel

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: LM-1891.

Toscanini's principle that whatever was printed in the score

DISCOGRAPHY: VON SUPPÉ

must be audible in the performance produced this performance which amazed me with details I had never heard before—details which, now that they were heard, added greatly to the expressive and humorous effect of the piece. And the performance gains from the characteristic continuity of the progression in which the detail is so clear.

This detail is reproduced with sharp distinctness by recording which places the ear too close to the orchestra; and the spacious and bright sound from a 13s side of LM-1891 played with RIAA equalization is more agreeable with treble and bass knobs turned down well below flat position.

VON SUPPÉ

Poet and Peasant Overture

1943. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of July 18, 1943). LP: in LM-6026.

Again it is fascinating to hear what the application of Toscanini's taste in molding of phrase, his sense for continuity of shape and tension, and his feeling for the style of a waltz make of this piece. A 4s side 4 of LM-6026 with RIAA equalization gives 8H sound that is made live and glossy by "enhancement" and that requires an 8-kc cutoff and turning down of the treble knob from flat position.

TCHAIKOVSKY

Concerto No. 1 for Piano

(1941.) NBC Symphony with Vladimir Horowitz. 78 rpm: M-800. LP transfer: LCT-1012.

When M-800 was issued I reported that it offered what was in effect Toscanini's performance—brehtaking in its intensity, its pace—to which Horowitz contributed brilliant playing of the solo part; and that the sound of the performance in Carnegie Hall came off the records shockingly altered—harsh, thin, without body, depth or warmth, and noisily clouded by reverberation. I haven't heard it since.

Symphonic Poem, Manfred

(1949.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1372). LP: LM-1037 and LVT-1024.

I didn't hear DM-1372; but a 10s-3s copy of the first-issued LM-1037, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, reproduces the superb performance with sound that is solid, clear and good, though not spacious and lustrous. In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a later LM-1037 (20s-10s and higher) altered and falsified the sounds of the instruments and made the tuttis confused, shallow and muddy down below. In 1956 I found the "enhancement" reduced on LVT-1024, and the sound listenable.

Nutcracker Suite

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRY-9000 and LM-1986

Better tempos, stronger rhythm, greater energy and finer musical taste make these familiar pieces fresh and exciting. With RIAA equalization a 7s side of LRY-9000 and a 7s side of LM-1986 give sound that is made brash by a treble

boost and is improved by turning the treble knob down well below flat position.

Overture-Fantasia, *Romeo and Juliet*

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: M-1178. LP transfer: LM-1019.

Both the lyrical and the dramatic pages of this work are given powerful effect by Toscanini's scrupulously accurate realization of the score. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, M-1178 gives sound that is solid, clear and bright; and an 8s (or possibly 18s) side of the first-issued LM-1019 gives this sound with less fullness and brightness and with the dubbing of the 78-rpm side 4 much lower in volume and much dimmer than the rest. In 1955 I found that the "enhanced" version on a later LM-1019 (30s and higher) produced blurred sound with electronic gloss on top and lack of clarity and solidity down below.

Symphony No. 6 in B minor (*Pathétique*)

1947. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (M-1281) and V-27 (red vinylite). LP transfer: LM-1037.

By playing this battered work exactly as Tchaikovsky directs, with none of the usual distorting overemphasis, Toscanini gives it to us "as fresh and glistening as creation itself," with its organic coherence, its expressive force and its artistic validity restored.

With bass turn-over at 400 and treble roll-off at 12, M-1281 gives sound of low volume which is agreeable and solid but compressed and lusterless; and V-27 gives sound

that is less bright and live. I don't have the first-issued LM-1037; but I reported at the time that the dubbed sound showed a loss in amplitude and brightness. And in 1955 I found that the "enhanced" sound from a later LM-1037 (30s-25s and higher) showed a loss of the earlier clarity and cleanness and compactness.

THOMAS

Overture to *Mignon*

(1942.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-8545.

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7013 and in LM-6026.

I recall how moving it was the first time—at a U. S. Treasury broadcast in 1942—to hear the introduction of this piece emerge from the orchestra with the exquisite inflections and contours it has on these records, and to hear the Allegro follow, superb in its sharply contoured grace and verve.

With RIAA equalization the first-issued LRM-7013 reproduced the introduction with marvelously beautiful sound which was made shallow and thin in the Allegro by an enormous bass cut. A 7s side 3 in LM-6026, with RIAA equalization, not only restores the bass in the Allegro but boosts both treble and bass throughout, so that violins are ear-piercing; and even with treble knob turned all the way down violins remain rough and sharp, becoming clear and agreeable only with an 8-kc cutoff.

VERDI

CHORAL WORKS

Hymn of the Nations

1943. NBC Symphony with Jan Peerce and the Westminster Choir directed by John Finlay Williamson (derived from the OWI film). LP: in LM-6041.

This performance—like the earlier one in the first Verdi broadcast on January 31, 1943, and the one at the Red Cross concert on May 25, 1944—was a patriotic action of Toscanini, which led him to add the *Internationale* and the *Star-Spangled Banner* to the Italian patriotic song and the French and English national anthems already in the piece.

The sound transferred from the film is poor and is afflicted with background hiss and with gritty distortion that can be cleaned up only by a drastic cutting down of treble range.

Requiem

1951. NBC Symphony with Herva Nelli, Fedora Barbieri, Giuseppe Di Stefano, Cesare Siepi and the Robert Shaw Chorale (derived from NBC recordings of the concert broadcast on January 27, 1951). LP: LM-6018.

Actually the records offer a piecing together of parts of the tapes of the broadcast and the dress rehearsal (and possibly the earlier rehearsals). Richard Gardner, in his *High Fidelity* article, described how the performance in LM-6018

was put together by the engineers, and approved by Toscanini, almost bar by bar; and it is a grim sort of joke on Toscanini that after all this work he approved a performance in which the solo soprano fails to sing her last "*Libera me*" seventeen measures from the end, on my early 5s copy of side 4. The performance has good singing by Siepi, and less consistently good singing by the other soloists.

With RIAA equalization my 1s-2s-1s-5s copy of LM-6018 gives excellent sound which—because of the piecing together of the various tapes—varies in balance, solidity and other characteristics. Some of the loud vocal passages—e.g., in the concluding fugue of the *Libera me*—come off the record with a little buzz of high-frequency distortion (a little more with the Fairchild 225 cartridge).

Te Deum

1954. NBC Symphony with the Robert Shaw Chorale (recorded during the broadcast on March 14, 1954). LP: LM-1849.

With RIAA equalization a 3s side of LM-1849 reproduces the wonderful performance with beautiful sound which needs bass turn-over at 629 for adequate solidity. Volume is below normal at the beginning and must be turned up until the end of the first big tutti on "*Sanctus . . . Dominus Deus Sabaoth*," then turned down for the rest of the piece.

OPERAS

At this point I recall Carl Van Vechten's remark that at the Metropolitan Toscanini "would conduct a *Tristan* or

Götterdämmerung that was overwhelming; but the thing to hear was his performance of early Verdi—of *La Traviata*." For I have used Otis Ferguson's phrase "as fresh and glistening as creation itself" to describe what Toscanini's accurate restatement made certain battered symphonic works sound like; and I could have used it with many other of his revelatory performances; but his most overwhelming achievements of this kind, for me, are his recorded performances of the Verdi operas, early and late, that have revealed the full measure of their beauty and expressive effect.

Aida

1949. NBC Symphony with Herva Nelli, Eva Gustavson, Richard Tucker, Giuseppe Valdengo and others, and the Robert Shaw Chorale (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of March 26 and April 2, 1949, with supplementary material recorded in June, 1954). LP: LM-6132.

Tucker's voice is steady, clear and powerful, but lacks warmth, luster and ease of flow; Valdengo's singing is superb; Nelli's and Gustavson's beautiful and expressive (since these two singers don't exhibit the vocal defects I recall in the first two acts, I assume the recording includes parts of the rehearsals, at which they were in better command of their voices).

The sound of the two arias of *Aida* recorded in Carnegie Hall in June 1954 has a resonant fullness that distinguishes it from the flatter, shallower but agreeable 8H sound pro-

duced by a 2s-2s-2s-2s-15s-4s copy of LM-6132 (with RIAA equalization) the rest of the time.

Un Ballo in Maschera

1954. NBC Symphony with Herva Nelli, Claramae Turner, Virginia Haskins, Jan Pearce, Robert Merrill and others, and the Robert Shaw Chorale (recorded during the broadcasts of January 17 and 24, 1954, with supplementary material recorded in June, 1954). LP: LM-6112.

Listening again after a couple of years I find the cast even better than I thought earlier; but Merrill's voice is as rough and coarse now as then.

This performance was recorded in Carnegie Hall; and the sound from a 4s-5s-3s-3s-4s-3s copy of LM-6112, with RIAA equalization, is remarkably spacious, but extremely close, and therefore sharply distinct, and lacks warmth and luster.

Falstaff

1950. NBC Symphony with Giuseppe Valdengo, Frank Guarrera, Herva Nelli, Nan Merriman, Chloe Elmo, Teresa Stich-Randall and others, and the Robert Shaw Chorale (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of April 1 and 8, 1950). LP: LM-6111.

The performance has excellent singing by the entire cast except the tenor who sings Fenton.

With RIAA equalization a 2s-1s-1s-1s-1s-1s copy of LM-

6111 gives sound which is reverberant and brashly bright, and which is more agreeable with treble and bass knobs turned down well below flat position. Moreover, the recording testifies that the enormous effort Toscanini put into achieving delicacy and clarity in the studio was largely nullified in the broadcast: vocal parts that were *piano* and *pianissimo* in the studio come off the record *forte*; texture isn't clear in the vocal ensembles; and the singing blankets the orchestral playing.

Otello

1947. NBC Symphony with Ramon Vinay, Giuseppe Valdengo, Herva Nelli and others, chorus directed by Peter Wilhousky, and boys' chorus directed by Eduardo Petri (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of December 1 and 8, 1947). LP: LM-6107.

Here Toscanini has an all but perfect cast with which he achieves his incandescent realization of Verdi's incandescent writing.

With RIAA equalization the "enhanced" recording on a 1S-1S-6S-5S-1S-5S copy of LM-6107 gives us the voices trailing fake reverberation in endless empty halls, and these voices not only inflated with a brash resonance which alters timbre, but afflicted at times with an edge of buzzing distortion that is best cleaned up by an 8-kc cutoff.

Rigoletto: Act 4

1944. NBC Symphony and New York Philharmonic-Symphony with Leonard Warren, Zinka Mi-

DISCOGRAPHY: VERDI

lanov, Jan Peerce, Nan Merriman and Nicola Moscona, and chorus directed by Peter Wilhousky (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of the Red Cross concert on May 25, 1944). LP: LM-6041.

In this performance Toscanini has a perfect cast, with Warren, Milanov and Peerce in their prime.

With RIAA equalization a 15 side 3 in LM-6041 gives sound which needs bass turn-over at 629, and whose stridency—e.g., in the introduction to "*La donna è mobile*"—requires the treble knob to be turned down well below flat position, at a cost in brightness of the voices. Warren's voice becomes gritty near the end; and there is a strong background hiss.

La Traviata

1946. NBC Symphony with Licia Albanese, Jan Peerce, Robert Merrill and others, and chorus directed by Peter Wilhousky (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcasts of December 1 and 8, 1946). LP: LM-6003.

Except for unsteadiness and inaccuracy in "*Sempre libera*" Albanese's singing is beautiful and moving; Peerce too is excellent; and only Merrill is poor.

With bass turn-over at RIAA and treble roll-off at 12, an early 15S-17S-7S-12S copy of LM-6013 gives sound that is flat, shallow and a little harsh, with occasional slight high-frequency distortion in the tuttis that makes it advisable to cut off at 8 or even 6 kc and to turn the treble

DISCOGRAPHY: VERDI

knob down from flat position. A recent 19s-17s-12s-18s copy gives sound which is made brighter and unpleasantly sharp by a treble boost that also makes the high-frequency distortion more pronounced.

EXCERPTS FROM THE OPERAS

La Forza del Destino: Overture

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9010.

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6026 and LM-6041.

A 3s side 1 in LM-6026, with RIAA equalization, reproduces the magnificent performance with sound that is beefed up at both ends, making the bass heavy and violins sharp. But on a 2s side 2 in LM-6041 the "enhancement" is removed and the sound, with the same equalization, is natural and excellent.

I Lombardi: Trio from Act 3

1943. NBC Symphony with Vivian Della Chiesa, Jan Peerce and Nicola Moscona, and with Mischa Mischakoff playing the violin solo (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of January 31, 1943). LP: in LM-6041.

Luisa Miller: Overture and Aria "*Quando le sere al placido*"

1943. NBC Symphony with Jan Peerce (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of July 25, 1943). LP: in LM-6041.

DISCOGRAPHY: VERDI

Nabucco: Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves, "Va, pensiero"
1943. NBC Symphony with the Westminster Choir
directed by John Finlay Williamson (derived
from NBC recordings of the broadcast of Janu-
ary 31, 1943). LP: in LM-6041.

The performance of the *Nabucco* chorus in the first Verdi broadcast on January 31, 1943, also was a patriotic action. And during the intermission of the second Verdi broadcast on July 25 the news came of Mussolini's fall.

The sound of these performances from a 5s side 1 and a 2s side 2 in LM-6041 is close and airless, but agreeable. An 8-kc cutoff, treble knob turned down from flat position, and bass turn-over at 629 are advisable.

Otello: Ballabili

1948. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of March 13, 1948). LP: in LM-6041.

A 5s side 4, with RIAA equalization, reproduces these charming dances for the Paris production with fuller 8H sound that is improved by turning the treble knob down from flat position.

La Traviata: Preludes to Acts 1 and 3

1929. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm:
6994. LP transfer: CAL-309.

(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 18080.

With treble roll-off at 12, 6994 needs a 6-kc cutoff and bass turn-over at 400. CAL-309, with RIAA equalization, needs

DISCOGRAPHY: WAGNER

the 6-kc cutoff and treble and bass knobs turned up from flat position.

The sound from 18080, with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at 12, is more lustrous on top but shallow and without solidity down below.

I Vespri Siciliani: Overture

1942. NBC Symphony (derived from NBC recordings of the broadcast of January 24, 1942). LP: in LM-6041.

The 2s side 2 in LM-6041, with RIAA equalization, gives sound which is close and airless, but agreeable with treble knob turned down from flat position, and which has the tuttis leveled off by a limiter.

WAGNER

INSTRUMENTAL PIECES

A Faust Overture

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-9642/3) in M-1135.

I don't have the recording; but when it was issued I reported that Toscanini's characteristic plastic modeling gave the piece powerful organic coherence and a hair-raising climax; and that the recorded sound was spacious and rich but a little brash.

Siegfried-Idyll

1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: (14009/10) in M-308. LP transfer: CAL-309.

DISCOGRAPHY: WAGNER

- (1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-9640/1) in M-1135. LP transfer: LCT-11116 and LVT-1004.
(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6020.

I don't have the first two recordings; but when the second was issued I reported that the performance was relaxed, tender, and characteristic in its plastic modeling; and I have the same thing to say about the performance in LM-6020.

The sound from CAL-309, with RIAA equalization, is fair; that of the 1946 performance, I reported, was spacious and rich but a little brash; and a 5s side 3 in LM-6020, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at RIAA, gives sound that is excellent.

EXCERPTS FROM THE OPERAS

Die Götterdämmerung

Dawn and Siegfried's Rhine Journey

1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: (14007/8) in M-308. LP transfer: CAL-375.
(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (18318/9) in M-853.
(1949.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6020.

The only important difference between the 1936 and 1949 performances (I don't have the other) is the slower and more effective *Dawn* of 1936; but listened to by itself the 1949 performance is completely effective and satisfying.

I don't have 14007/8; but CAL-375, with RIAA equalization, reproduces the superb solidity of the original sound

to a surprising degree. Violins are a little dim; and a 6-kc cutoff is necessary.

With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, a 1s side of the first-issued LM-1157 gives excellent sound, which is improved by turning the treble knob down from flat position. I have no notes on the "enhanced" sound from the later LM-1157 (10s and higher); but a 3s side 1 in LM-6020—with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at RIAA, and with treble knob turned down from flat position—makes the sound a little lighter and glossier and more diffuse.

Siegfried's Death and Funeral Music

(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (18319/20) in M-853.

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6020.

For thirty years we got an idea of the Toscanini *Götterdämmerung* that Carl Van Vechten called overwhelming from Toscanini's performances of this excerpt. I remember its overwhelming effect at his first concerts with the New York Philharmonic in 1926; and it has the same effect as it comes off the record in LM-6020.

I don't have the 1941 recording; but when it was issued I reported that the sound was bright and live on top but lacked body and solidity down below. With RIAA equalization a 4s side 2 in LM-6020 gives superb sound, which is even better in the climaxes with bass turn-over at 800.

Immolation Scene

(1941.) NBC Symphony with Helen Traubel. 78 rpm; M-978. LP transfer: LCT-1116 and LVT-1004.

When M-978 was issued I wrote that it was an outstanding event because of the performance, which was reproduced in all its beauty. And when LCT-1116 was issued I reported that the dubbed sound was very good. LVT-1004 I haven't heard.

Lohengrin

Prelude to Act 1

1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: 14006 in M-308. LP transfer: CAL-375.

(1941.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-8807 and (11-9287 in M-1074).

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7029 and in LM-6020.

The reproduction of the beautiful performance by 14006, with bass turn-over at 500 and treble roll-off at 12 and with an 8-kc cutoff, is the best achieved in 1936—with magnificently spacious, solid and lustrous sound that becomes tremendous at the climax. And the dubbing of this recording on CAL-375 is outstandingly good, giving us a surprising amount of the original solidity and brightness.

With treble roll-off at 12 the sound from 11-8807 is bright and live on top; but even with bass turn-over at 800 it is shallow and without solidity down below.

DISCOGRAPHY: WAGNER

The first-issued LRM-7029, with turn-over at 800 and roll-off at RIAA, gives beautiful sound with insufficient solidity at the climax; and a 5s side 3 in the later LM-6020, with the same equalization, gives this sound with balance tipped toward the treble end, making the violins glistening and silky, and the trumpets and violins much sharper at the climax.

Prelude to Act 3

1936. New York Philharmonic-Symphony. 78 rpm: (14007) in M-308. LP transfer: CAL-375.
(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7029 and in LM-6020.

Die Meistersinger

Prelude to Act 1

- (1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9385. LP transfer: in LM-6020.

With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, 11-9385 reproduces the fine performance with sound that is full and clear but not lustrous. With RIAA equalization the dubbed sound from a 4s side 2 in LM-6020 is good; and it is even better—especially in the final section—with turn-over at 800.

Prelude to Act 3

- (1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7029 and in LM-6020.

The wonderful performance of this affecting piece enables us to hear the extraordinarily integrated sound of the NBC

Symphony brass section in the last years—plastically shaped and sensitively inflected like the sound of one instrument. It is superbly reproduced by the first-issued LRM-7029 with RIAA equalization; but the sound from the 4s side 2 in LM-6020 has the balance tipped toward the treble end, making the cellos lighter and glossier and the brass brighter and less solid and deep.

Parsifal: Prelude and *Good Friday Spell*

(1949.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (DM-1376). LP: LM-15 and in LM-6020.

I never heard DM-1376. With bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12 the first-issued LM-15 reproduces the beautiful performances with excellent sound; but a 1s side 4 in LM-6020 gives us this sound with balance tipped toward the treble end, making the bass less sharply defined and the upper range brighter and glossier and not cleanly defined in quiet.

Siegfried: *Forest Murmurs*

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7029.

Tristan und Isolde: Prelude and Finale

(1942.) Finale. NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-8666) in M-978.

(1952.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6020.

It is from the performances of this piece that we have obtained an idea of the Toscanini *Tristan* that Van Vechten called overwhelming. The performance that was overwhelm-

DISCOGRAPHY: WALDTEUFEL

ing in 1926 continued unchanged as late as the 1944 Red Cross concert; then in the last years it changed amazingly in the direction of slowness, breadth and tension that made it even more overwhelming. The recording in LM-6020 preserves for us the later performance; but of the earlier one only the 1942 Finale was issued in M-978: the Prelude of which I heard the test pressing in 1942 couldn't be issued because the recording hadn't caught the last quiet plucked G of the basses.

The sound of the 1942 Finale, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, is excellent. And luckily a 3s side 1 in LM-6020, with RIAA equalization, reproduces the 1952 performance superbly.

Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries

(1946.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (11-9643) in M-1135.

(1952.) NBC Symphony. 45 rpm: ERA-249.

WALDTEUFEL

Waltz, The Skaters

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-8949, (11-9227 in M-1062) and 12-3024B/5B in DM-1416. LP transfers: LM-14, LRY-9000 and LM-1986.

When I heard the recording the first time, Toscanini's plastic modeling of the slow introduction brought tears to my eyes, and I was enchanted by his playing of the waltz itself; and these responses don't seem excessive when I listen today. But in place of the harsh sound that I reported

hearing in 1945, 11-8949, with bass turn-over at 800 and treble roll-off at 12, today gives sound that is solid, warm and bright. I never heard LM-14; but a 4s side of LRY-9000 and a 5s side of LM-1986 give sound of less fullness but sufficient solidity, with dimmer violins that can be brightened by turning up the treble knob from flat position.

WEBER

Invitation to the Dance (orchestrated by Berlioz)

(1938.) BBC Symphony. 78 rpm: (15192).

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-2056.

I don't have the earlier recording, possibly because of the poor reproduction of the enchanting performance from both the copies I obtained at the time.

A 1s side of LM-2056, with RIAA equalization, gives sound with a treble boost that requires the treble knob to be turned down well below flat position. In addition, stridency and gritty distortion develop in the latter part of the piece (in the sound from the record but not from the tape from which it was processed) and are cleaned up only by an 8-kc cutoff.

OVERTURES

Euryanthe

(1951.) NBC Symphony. LP: in LM-6026.

Der Freischütz

(1945.) NBC Symphony. 78 rpm: 11-9172.

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7028 and in LM-6026.

DISCOGRAPHY: WOLF-FERRARI

Oberon

1952. NBC Symphony. LP: LRM-7028 and in LM-6026.

Beautiful performances, of which the *Euryanthe* comes off a 3s side 2 in LM-6026 (RIAA equalization) with reverberant but good sound. On the first-issued LRM-7028 the *Freischütz* needs bass turn-over at 629 with the treble roll-off at RIAA; on the side in the later LM-6026 it suffers from gritty distortion that is cleaned up by an 8-kc cutoff. On LRM-7028, with RIAA equalization, the sound of the *Oberon* is very good, except that the violins aren't bright in the tuttis; on the side in LM-6026 they are brightened by a treble boost.

WOLF-FERRARI

Overture to *The Secret of Suzanne*

(1921.) La Scala Orchestra. (66081 and 840.)

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted

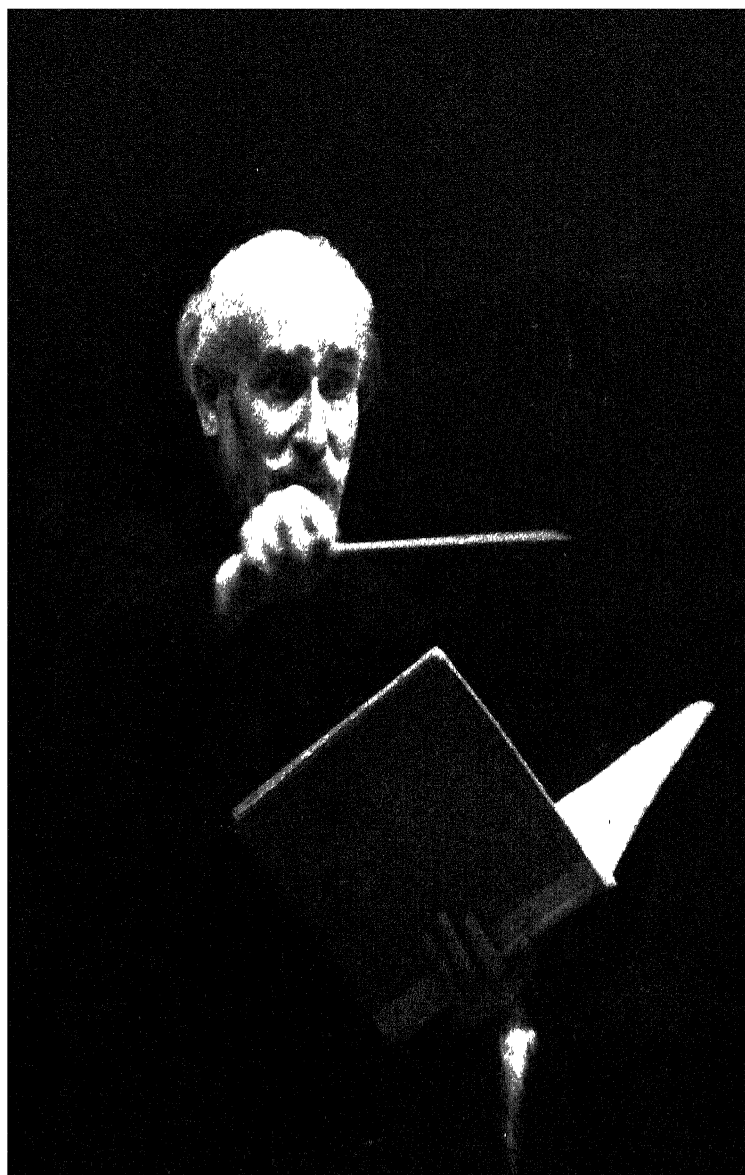
To Walter Toscanini, for verification of a number of dates and programs, for information about his father's early repertory, and for permission—which however his sisters, Mrs. Vladimir Horowitz and Countess Castelbarco, withheld—to publish the texts of his father's letters to me.

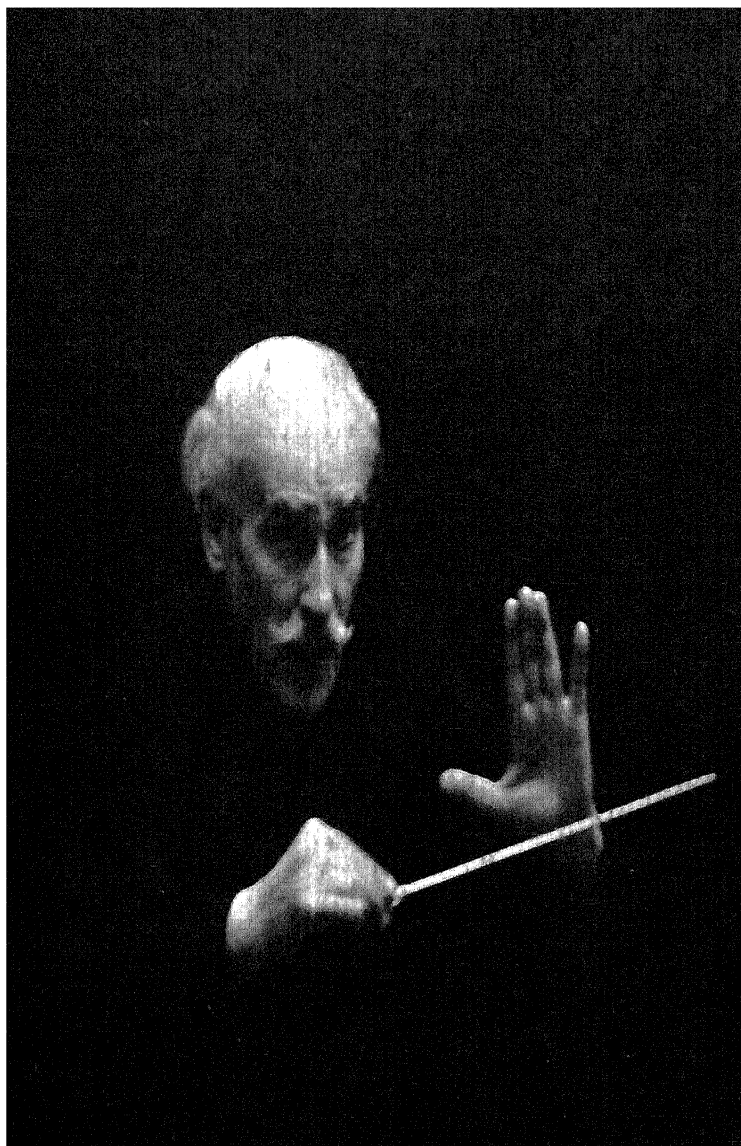
To several members of the NBC Symphony, and other persons who also must remain nameless, for information about some matters I discuss.

To Robert Hupka, for generously making available to me five of his photographs from the collection he plans to use in a book of his own.

To Herb Helman of RCA Victor, for liaison service that was largely fruitless, but not entirely so. Thus, E. C. Forman did not provide me with the list of the dates of Toscanini's recordings that I asked for; but he did confirm the correctness of the dates I submitted in place of a number in the list published by Marsh; and he did tell me what Toscanini remade at the last recording sessions in June 1954. Also, Daniel Slick reported that the cards in the files showed no changes since 1955 in any of the previously issued Toscanini recordings except those of the Beethoven symphonies. And Richard Mohr gave me the date of the spliced-in passage in the *Ibéria* recording.

To Robert E. Garis, for his critical reading of the manuscript; Roger Dakin, for help in a few editorial problems; Margaret Nicholson, for answers to questions about technical editorial details; and Charles B. Farrell, for help with proofs and index.





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